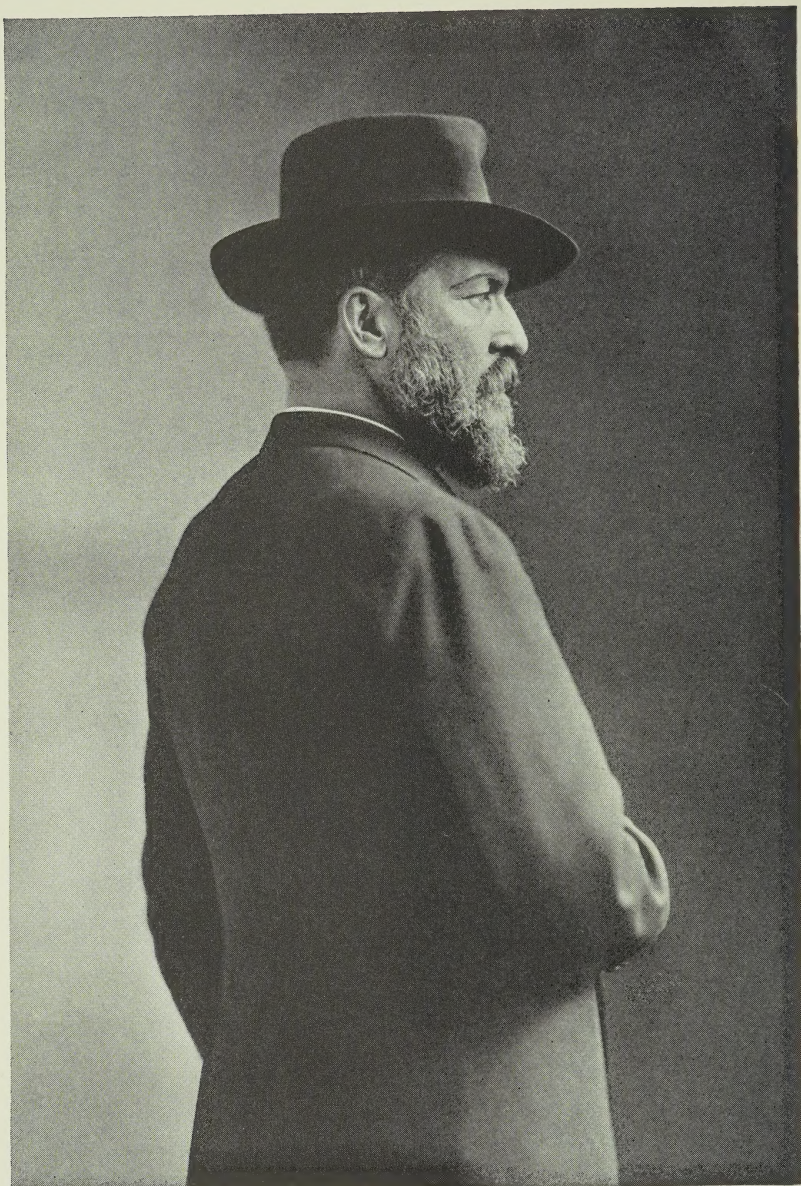


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THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD



JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

1880

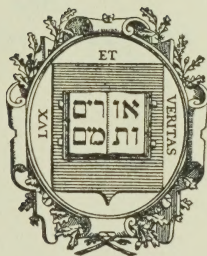
THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

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VOLUME TWO

1877-1882



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CHAPTER XVIII

HAYES'S ADMINISTRATION, MINORITY LEADER

1877-1880

THE last years of Garfield's service in the House of Representatives found him playing a wholly different rôle from any that he had previously undertaken. As a result of his action in the Forty-fourth Congress he had gained great prominence as a party spokesman, and with his renunciation of his senatorial aspirations at Hayes's request in order that he might stay in the House as the administration leader, he assumed a position as the President's representative that was bound to give him a political prestige beyond anything he had hitherto enjoyed. What had been a purely tentative matter in June, 1876, was now a definitely accomplished fact. It lay with Garfield in no small degree to make or mar the success of the coming administration, which by his vote in the Electoral Commission he had done so much to install. What lent a peculiar feature to the situation was that Hayes and Garfield, although acquainted for years, were not and could not be really intimate, owing to the barrier of wholly different temperaments. There was something about Hayes's cool, detached method of looking at men and actions, and his absence of personal warmth that was utterly unlike Garfield's way of regarding things.

What increased Garfield's sense of distance from Hayes was the deep-rooted sense of deference to authority that he always felt. He quoted in his journal what he himself said on March 29 to J. Q. Smith. "I told him I had always felt a great distance between myself and the President. Intimate as I have been with Governor Hayes for many years, I have not yet been able to regain that feeling of familiarity that I am sure he would be willing should continue between us. I must try to overcome the feeling in part."

It was certain that Hayes would have to call a special

session of Congress before the regular December meeting in order to deal with the Army Bill that had failed during the last tumultuous hours of the preceding congress; but he delayed doing so until the autumn, in order that he might have a free hand to establish his own executive policies. From Garfield's point of view it was of the first importance that these should be such as to rally behind him a united party, but the beginnings were not hopeful. Hayes took office pledged specifically to two policies, reform in the Civil Service and conciliation of the South and of all elements in the Republican party. It may be doubted whether any Northern leader, no matter what his personal characteristics, could have made a popular success of any such policies. In the case of Hayes there was a certain dryness and tameness of manner and an apparent smallness of caliber which at the outset nearly wrecked the party, at least in the opinion of so moderate a man as Garfield. With such a program it would have taken a president of conspicuous magnetism and leadership to create an impression of power. Hayes had neither of these qualities. What he did possess, time was to show.

Entries in Garfield's journal show the course of his opinion on the Southern conciliation plan. "March 6. Hayes is thinking of putting a rebel in his cabinet. He should either take none or the greatest. It would either be a disastrous failure or a great success. I fear he is not quite up to the heroic method." "Sun. March 11 heard the general situation quite fully discussed with many criticisms upon the policy of the President. It is clear that below the surface of approval there is much hostile criticism and a strong tendency to believe that Hayes will be a failure. Blaine thinks the differences between the North and the South are too deep to be bridged over by the proposed methods. I insisted however that we should give the policy a fair trial and have said so to all who have spoken to me on the subject." So Garfield began his services as defender and supporter.

Hayes was optimistic enough, and also inexperienced enough in Congressional matters, to think that, in return for his conciliation policy, the Democrats might aid in elect-

ing Garfield Speaker. On this Garfield wrote (August 6): "The slush of newspaper talk in reference to the Speakership is getting to be very absurd and annoying. . . . It is generally known that I am a candidate though I do not have much faith in the ability of the Republicans to organize the House. It will however be a test of the sincerity of the Southern Democratic supporters of Hayes' policy to know whether they will give him an Administration House. If they do, he may succeed. If not his friends, North, will not tolerate a continuance of his Southern scheme." On the day that he left Washington he confided to his cousin, Dr. Boynton (April 12): "In the main the President's purposes are right. I have some fear however that he is going a little faster than our people will sustain him. I see signs already of an outbreak in our own ranks."

At the same time he saw the beginning of Hayes's Civil Service Reform policy, which, since the failure of Congressional appropriations under Grant, could be set up only on the basis of executive rules. The appointment of Schurz, one of the leading assailants of Grant in 1872, as Secretary of the Interior, and his immediate adoption of a civil service policy for his department was the first step. Garfield wrote: "The appointment of Schurz is unfortunate and unwise, but still it ought to be confirmed to give the President a chance to test his policy. If we could return to the policy of the Fathers and make the country know that offices were not party rewards it would be a great step." In spite of this, the rush for offices was something unprecedented and overwhelming, although there had been no change in party administration. Garfield's diary is filled with such items as the following: "March 27, The day was dismal outside but it could not dampen the ardor of the office-seekers who came separately and in droves. . . . It is surprising how many insist on having me read all their papers . . . that tell the same stereotyped story, many of them doubtless written under duress. I can read between the lines the disgust of those who wrote them."

Garfield escaped the annoyance by returning to Ohio on April 12, but when he was called back to Washington for a

few days at the end of May he found the tide still surging around the departments. He wrote, half-humorously, to his wife (May 29): "I had hardly arrived before the door-bell began to ring and the old stream of office-seekers began to pour in. They had scented my coming and were lying in wait for me like vultures for a wounded bison. All day long it has been a steeple chase, I fleeing and they pursuing."

By the middle of the summer Garfield was seriously alarmed over the savage criticism stirred up in all quarters by Hayes's methods regarding offices. What struck him as particularly ill-advised was a letter of June 22 in which Hayes supported Schurz in saying that "no officer shall be . . . permitted to take part in the management of party organizations" and added that members of Congress were not to be allowed to dictate in the matter of patronage.¹ Garfield wrote to Cox, July 30, asking his judgment. "You and I," he said, "were among the earliest to urge Civil Service Reform. We can not afford to see the movement made a failure by injudicious management. Now if the President means to divorce the executive functions from those of Congressmen in the matter of appointments he has my heartiest coöperation. I will cheerfully lay down all right either to dictate or to be consulted in regard to appointments, if all others are to do the same, but . . . if nobody is to be appointed because he is your friend or my friend, then nobody should be appointed because he is any other man's friend. The President himself should exercise the same self denial as other officials. . . . Now it seems to me he had not done this. I can name several instances where he has appointed his old comrades apparently for no other reason except that they were his old friends. I do not think it was judicious to carry his order in regard to office-holders acting as members of political committees to the extent he has done. The freedom of the citizen to vote is no more sacred than his freedom to attend the primary meeting for selection of candidates."

At the same time there was a loud outburst of protest against Hayes's Southern policy, which consisted in withdrawing all troops from the Southern states, dropping all

¹ *Annual Cyclopedica*, 1877, p. 749.

political prosecutions for violations of the election laws or the Ku Klux act, and in general, as his critics charged, abandoning the negroes and the "loyal men" to the mercy of the Southern Democrats. When Garfield, on July 31, went to the Republican State Convention of Ohio, he found to his dismay that the party was much depressed by the President's policies, and, in addition, was in danger of being carried away by the new agitation in favor of silver coinage that had been growing ever since the previous summer.

Once more Garfield exerted himself to stave off inflationism. In the journal he wrote: "I went to Foster's room at the Kennard by invitation and met Senator Mathews, General Cox and about fifteen other gentlemen to consult about the platform. I was distressed to find that Mathews was in favor of letting down in the financial question. I gave notice that I would not abide by any action of the Convention which did not hold the faith. . . . I was willing to try bi-metallism but only by a new adjustment of the two metals." The next day, strongly backed by the delegates from the Reserve, Garfield got himself put on the Committee on Resolutions, framed a suitable plank and then was made permanent chairman of the convention. After it he wrote to Riddle (September 3): "On the whole I think the Cleveland convention got through in fair shape and with a pretty good ticket. Many of our people were hurt over the President's policy toward the South and, in addition to that the old mania for inflation seems to have made headway. . . . The fact is, the people need to be converted to sound finance about once in six months. I do not think the situation is very hopeful. Still we have a good fighting chance to carry the state."

The plank which Garfield framed called for the use of both gold and silver "with valuation so regulated that our people shall not be placed at a disadvantage in our trade with foreign nations."¹ This was a sharp change from Garfield's attitude a year before, which is explained in a letter he wrote at this time to Hinsdale (September 19): "The study I have recently given has brought the following points to weigh with a good deal of force upon my mind. 1st in the

¹ *Annual Cyclopedia*, 1877, p. 620.

review of a book written by Reuss, a German, it is said that . . . henceforth we must depend upon gold quartz mining which is very expensive and . . . if the single standard is adopted its price will so increase as to vary the standard materially and dangerously. Hence the necessity of bimetallism to keep up the coinage supply. 2nd. France has successfully kept both metals in circulation in the ratio of 15½ to 1 and a general agreement among leading nations to adopt that ratio will probably make a resultant standard more stable than gold alone. On these grounds I have become a probationary convert to bimetallism." It was clearly an intellectual not a political conversion on his part.

Garfield made his usual brisk stumping campaign in the state election, having, for a novelty, some joint debates with Pendleton, which he thoroughly enjoyed. "On some accounts I dislike such a scramble," he wrote to his wife, September 11, in notifying her of his acceptance of the challenge. "I hate to be a spectacle that people go to see as to a dog-fight. But Pendleton is a gentleman. We shall have a courteous debate." In spite of his feeling that he made effective points against his antagonist he foresaw defeat. On October 8 he wrote in the journal, "I have done all I could to keep the Republican party in line but I am conscious of a spirit of apathy and dissatisfaction among our people that may bring us great disaster." The result the next day, he wrote, "more than confirmed my worst fears." The Democrats made a clean sweep.

Bishop (Democrat)	West (Republican)	Senate	House
271,625	249,105	25-10	66-41-3

In analyzing the causes Garfield laid the main stress, after the "usual apathy of the off year," upon "the effects of the Civil Service Policy and the dissatisfaction with the southern policy."

Immediately after the election came the special session of Congress, and Garfield hurried to Washington to assume his duties, depressed and anxious over the situation. "I find the Democrats," he recorded October 12, "are as bitter and

foolish as they are jubilant over the result of their Ohio success." As for Hayes, not even the loss of his own state could shake his complacency. After calling on him with Cox, Monroe and Foster, Garfield wrote (October 13): "I am satisfied that his six months administration have partially blinded the President to the dangers and criticisms of his course. It seems to be impossible for a President to see through the atmosphere of praise in which he lives." Under such depressing circumstances Garfield had to begin the task of trying to lead the administration party in the House during the coming months.

The House was again controlled by the Democrats, who in this Congress lost several of their most experienced men. Holman and Kerr of Indiana were gone, the latter having died as Speaker in 1876; Lamar had been elected to the Senate, but the influx of "Confederate Brigadiers," *e.g.*, H. A. Herbert, was sufficient to enable them to struggle forward gallantly, although much hampered by their lack of parliamentary skill. It was partly this fact, no doubt, which led them to resort to extremely rigid caucus management, binding the members of the party in the House to vote together on all subjects, regardless of individual views.

On the Republican side Garfield found supporting him a group of party lieutenants who were often willing to fight far harder than he thought necessary. One of these, Conger of Michigan, had by this time developed into perhaps the most skillful and aggressive man in the game of parliamentary obstruction, but another man, T. B. Reed of Maine, stepped in this, his first session, well to the front.

Among others Butler reappeared in this House, but the position as next friend and mouthpiece of the President which he had assumed and enjoyed under Grant was no longer possible; he was more than suspected of an intention to transfer his allegiance from the Republicans, and his power in the party was in no sense what it had been. Garfield did not feel any disquietude over his return.

Four new members from Ohio in this session deserve notice on account of their relations to Garfield. One was no less a person than Jacob D. Cox, his old Senatorial colleague and

constant correspondent for seventeen years. Garfield greatly enjoyed having this perfectly independent and detached but extremely valuable friend again with him. Another whom he knew well was Amos Townsend, a resident of Cleveland and a neighbor, now entering Congress. A third was General Joseph Warren Keifer, a man with a fine war record, who entered Congress from the Springfield district and was immediately on friendly terms with his more experienced colleague. A fourth was William McKinley, who in this Congress entered the House as representative from the tenth district, which now included Mahoning County, Garfield's old constituency. With him, a much younger man, this was the beginning of a lively friendship.

The House organized, October 15, the Democrats re-electing Randall as Speaker, while the Republicans cast their complimentary vote for Garfield, with the exception of sundry protectionists of the strictest sect who could not bring themselves to do so. The journal says: "A committee from the Pennsylvania delegation called to say that some of their members, notably Erret and Kelley, were embarrassed about voting for me on account of my tariff, currency and silver views. I told them I had asked nobody to vote for me for speaker and did not expect to . . . but I could not allow them to brand me with unsoundness as a Republican."

The Democrats left most of the committees unchanged but concentrated particular strength on the financial committees. Wood of New York, the veteran Copperhead, was supported by Tucker of Virginia and Gibson of Louisiana on the Ways and Means. J. C. D. Atkins of Tennessee had A. S. Hewitt of New York, a notably strong man in this line, behind him on the Appropriations Committee. Garfield was still on the Ways and Means—powerless, of course—and on the Committee on Rules, but his duties henceforward were to be little concerned with legislation. He must criticise Democratic measures, expose Democratic mistakes, use his powers of oratory and parliamentary management to hamper or defeat their measures, and above and beyond all take such positions and so guide his followers as to tend to win votes for the party in the next Congressional election.

Hitherto Garfield's concern had been less with the political effect of measures than with their actual merits; now he must utter every word with a view to its probable effect on the fortunes of the party.

Garfield began this phase of his career under the severe drawback imposed by the great unpopularity of the President, which bade fair to split the party. In a conference of about twenty leaders at Secretary Sherman's on October 19, he wrote, "Great differences of opinion in regard to the President's policy were developed and the prospects of a division in our party were very strong." A week later Garfield frankly told the President that the fatal flaw in his policy was that he assumed to act as though Southern conciliation was his own personal doing. "He thus made his friends fear and his political enemies hope that he was acting as though he were not in alliance with his party. . . . It would have been more just and more politic to have associated his party with his proffers of goodwill." This was the first of a long number of conferences in which Garfield made more and more pointed suggestions, and Hayes, with a certain cool patience, listened to the House leader. The result was in time to be wholesome for both, but before they attained agreement they had incurred several severe defeats.

So grave did Garfield consider the party disaffection that he did not dare call a party caucus. He said of this, later: "I held the rôle then of trying to protect our party from splitting and being the acknowledged leader of the House I did it by keeping our people for six months from having a caucus except to elect officers. . . . The tendency of a part of our party to assail Hayes and denounce him as a traitor and a man who was going to Johnsonize the party was very strong and his defenders were comparatively few."¹

For several months after the meeting of the special session the interest of the country was focused on an astonishing revival of inflationist sentiment, and Garfield found himself once more engaged in a desperate defense of the country's financial good faith. The army bill, for which the session was called, was passed with no controversy, for the

¹ *Biographical Notes*, 1880.

majority of the Democrats and many of the Republicans were more interested in the passage of currency measures. In the first test vote on the latter, October 31, Garfield found twenty-two majority against him. "The old soft-money folly seems to have gained strength since the last Congress," he commented. "Our final defense will probably be a veto. I hold Hayes' letter of March 1876 as my last hope on that subject." A bill to repeal the act for the resumption of specie payments was then pushed to a vote. "The debate," recorded Garfield, November 15, "disclosed the disheartening state of public opinion. Every exploded dogma of inflation reappears with renewed strength." The next day he made a defiant speech. "I used too much voice and too much muscular force as usual," he commented, "but I made the argument effective and clear." Evidently the excessive voice and gesture stirred his hearers, for he added (Hinsdale, November 20): "At the close I was warmly applauded and a large number of members came to my seat to congratulate me. It so interrupted the proceedings of the House that I retired to the lobby and for a further escape to the barbers. I found myself a good deal exhausted."

Years later his young colleague from Ohio, William McKinley, speaking in the House, January 18, 1886, on accepting a statue of Garfield for Statuary Hall, referred to this speech in glowing terms.¹ "To me his greatest effort was made on this floor in the forty-fifth congress from his old seat yonder near the center aisle. He was at his best. He rose to the highest requirements of the subject and the occasion. His mind and soul were absorbed with his topic. He felt the full responsibility of his position and the necessity of averting a policy which he believed would be disastrous. . . . Unfriendly criticism seemed only to give him breadth of contemplation and boldness and force of utterance. Those of us who were so fortunate as to hear him cannot efface the recollection of his matchless effort. Both sides of this Chamber were eager listeners and crowded galleries bent to catch every word. No one thing he had ever done contributed so much to his subsequent elevation; no act of his life required

¹ C. S. Olcott, *William McKinley*, Vol. I, p. 199.

higher courage; none displayed greater power; none realized to him larger honors; none brought him higher praise."

In reading the speech it is easy to see why it won such approval at the time and stirred McKinley in retrospect, for Garfield took a hackneyed subject and gave it life and vigor by his treatment and delivery.¹ The comment of Godkin in the *Nation*² on the reasons for the great impression it made, is keen: "The success of General Garfield's speech in the House on Friday—for it is said to have achieved the rare distinction of being a speech that changed votes—is, from one point of view, very curious. The speech consisted simply of a plain, unvarnished statement of facts, most effectively put together, it is true, but put without any rhetorical device or embellishment. . . . In fact in reading over his speech we have not been able to lay our finger on anything of which the average newspaper-reading American may not fairly be presumed to have knowledge. What then is the reason that the speech proved so effective? It is not far to seek and it reflects more credit on him than if he had been able to cram it full of startling discoveries." The conclusion of the *Nation* was that while other Republican leaders had spoken vaguely or doubtfully about resumption, Garfield had the courage to come out and openly demand the fulfillment of the resumption law.

Garfield himself did not overvalue the speech. In replying to Hinsdale, who had remarked that it was "a vigorous document, abounding in strong points, strongly stated. But I can see no reason why men should think this speech the greatest effort of your life," he said (November 29): "I agree with you that the newspapers are wrong in overpraising my speech. . . . Its chief merit is that it was an immediate reply to points that were elaborately prepared and supposed to be strong. It is quite surprising that it has made so much impression. I have received about 500 letters in regard to it. The Presidents of Rutgers and Racine colleges have asked for copies enough to put into the hands of their classes for study."

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 461-465.

² November 22, 1877, p. 312.

The bill passed by thirteen majority, but the Senate proved less ready to turn back the clock and the bill did not reappear in the House for over a year, during which time the resumption actually took place. But meanwhile the House had turned to another form of inflation and on November 5 rushed through a bill for the free coinage of silver. Garfield at this time was absent in Ohio and did not vote, but he was strenuously opposed to any form of silver coinage that was not based on international agreement on a ratio between the two precious metals. In Ohio and in his own district he once more found inflationism so rampant that he wrote to Hinsdale (January 9): "I am not sure but the 19th district will go back on me on the silver question. If they do, I shall count it an honorable discharge." He wrote at this same time in his journal: "Jan. 7 The financial craze has let down upon America a fog denser than London's through which I see no signs of an early sun but many signs of an eclipse of national honor. I am fighting against the majority of my own party and state and I grow weary of the contest. If it were one of logic, reason, sense, I could enjoy it, but it is a fight of interest against honor, of brute force of votes against knowledge."

Garfield had both the President and Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, squarely behind him at this juncture, for Hayes, in his annual message of December 3, had taken strong ground against free coinage; but Hayes's support counted for little and against the "brute force of votes" he went down fighting vainly. On January 28 Garfield found himself alone among the Ohio delegation in voting against a resolution declaring all bonds payable in silver. By February the House silver coinage bill, amended so as to provide for coining two to four millions per month, instead of an unlimited amount, had passed the Senate. Garfield wrote to Austin (February 20) at this juncture: "Excepting perhaps the fury over the salary grab I have never seen a craze equal to that which now possesses the public mind in regard to silver. The bill is certain to pass, and although the Senate has made amendments which will take away some of its evil features still its central evil remains and if I vote alone I

shall vote against it in its present shape. Notwithstanding this I want both gold and silver; not a dishonest silver dollar which will drive out all the gold but one as nearly equal to the gold dollar as it can be made." When the bill as amended came to a vote, February 21, Garfield secured three minutes only in which to say why he voted first for the senate amendments limiting the amount coined to not over four millions a month and then against the bill, even so amended.¹ The House then rushed it through 163 to 34, Garfield in the negative. "In the last vote," he remarked, "I stood almost alone in the West. Time will show whether I was wise or otherwise." Hayes stood firm as Garfield had hoped and returned the bill with a strong veto message on February 28, but only to bring into clear relief his total lack of influence. Garfield wrote in his journal: "Without a word of debate the bill was passed over the veto by 196 to 73. I again voted alone among the Ohio delegation and almost alone in the Mississippi Valley. The Senate was equally summary and decisive in its proceedings. The vote stood 43 to 19. The President was not only unable to influence a single vote but lost some in the House. He has pursued a suicidal policy toward Congress and is almost without a friend."

A few days later "Pig-iron" Kelley, a leading inflationist, took occasion to exult over Garfield's defeat and to assail him in a bitterly personal manner, replying to his speech of November. Ten years before Garfield would have paid slight attention to such an assault, but now he was in such a position that he could not overlook it, and on March 6 he replied. "At two o'clock got the floor and spoke about one hour in reply to Kelley. I have perhaps never made a speech in the House that elicited more attention and applause. A company of prominent citizens from Philadelphia were in the gallery, who at the close came to the door and requested to be introduced to me. Several of them thanked me for the speech and said I had done their state a service by making it." The speech was more than a personal defense against Kelley, it was a restatement and strengthening of his whole argument

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1279.

against inflation, calm and serious in tone and wholly undisturbed by Kelley's savagery.¹

Some idea of the demoralization of the Republicans at this juncture may be gathered from Garfield's comments. On March 1 he called on Hayes. "The President spoke of the political situation . . . and thought our party could be united on opposition to inflation. I told him if he wished to hold any influence he must abandon some of his notions of Civil Service. He compared his situation with Lincoln's unpopularity in Congress." Two days later Garfield wrote, "I am inclined to believe that his election has been an almost fatal blow to the party." The next, "J. D. Cox today told me that the President had utterly failed to accomplish anything in the way of civil service reform and that he had pursued no system that could be defended by any class of politicians. The impression is deepening that he is not large enough for the place he holds." Amplifying this in a letter to Austin (March 3), Garfield said that Hayes had "that worst infirmity, the fear of being influenced by men of his own party who are larger than he. The result is that he shuts himself up and does not avail himself of the help which every president needs." Garfield thought also that the influence of the Secretary of State might be blamed. "Evarts," he wrote in the journal, "was so full of theory and his own cogitations that he could reach no practical conclusions. I fear his dreamy doctrines have captivated the President and led him into many of his unfortunate ways that have done so much to alienate his friends."

Garfield had by this time a personal grievance against the administration in that his friend, J. Q. Smith, whose appointment as Indian Commissioner he had largely engineered, was assailed by a House committee and later removed by Schurz. He wrote to Smith in the summer of 1877 (July 6): "I see they are investigating your bureau. I need not assure you that I have no fear that any just investigation will in any way reflect on you. If any attempt is made to do so, command me and I shall be at your back anywhere and everywhere." But Schurz caused his removal. The jour-

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 1606-1607.

nal says: "Jan. 19 At eight P.M. went to the President's with John Q. Smith and talked very plainly to the President about the course which Secretary Schurz has pursued towards him. I told him the method had been outrageous and unjust and the result ought to be atoned for in some effective way. He does not seem to be master of his own administration. I fear he has less force and nerve than I supposed." Smith's appointment as consul general to Canada soothed Garfield's resentment, but his distress over the President's policies remained unabated.

From this situation the President and his party were now saved by the Democrats, who, after the currency questions were out of the way, took up in earnest the plan of making party capital by undertaking to investigate the events in Louisiana which preceded and accompanied the casting of the electoral vote. Such action made it clear that no real conciliation had been brought about by Hayes's policy, but that the Democrats were hoping to discredit his title by attacking the Returning Board. "The policy of the President," wrote Garfield to Sheldon (February 12), "has turned out to be a give-away from the beginning. He has nolle suits, discontinued prosecutions, offered conciliation everywhere in the South while they have spent their time in whetting their knives for any Republican they could find. I am tired of this warfare and now propose to fight them wherever they make an attack." A few days later (February 19) he frankly told the Democrats that their actions imperiled the President's policy. "The prosecutions of the Returning Board of Louisiana," he said, "are the beginning of a purpose to open the question of the presidential election to its foundation and hence we meet it at the threshold. The people whom I try to represent . . . feel that their efforts at pacification have not been met in the spirit in which they were offered, and that if this sort of proceeding goes forward, you not only cripple the President in his efforts to bring about that pacification, but you cripple every man who attempts to sustain him."¹

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 191-194.

In spite of this warning the Democrats on May 13 moved a resolution for a select committee to investigate the frauds in the counting of the electoral vote in Florida and Louisiana. Immediately the Republican party rallied to the support of Hayes, for no matter how little they relished his personal policies, they were compelled to stand by the legitimacy of his title. Coöperation instantly began between them. On May 13 "The president sent word," wrote Garfield, "that he thinks we ought to insist on debating the Potter resolution at length. This we will probably do." Still more striking, Garfield immediately called a caucus, May 15, which adopted strong resolutions denouncing the proposed investigation as revolutionary. "Reed of Maine drew the first," wrote Garfield, "and I drew the second." The next day Garfield went to the executive mansion and consulted for two hours with Hayes on how to meet the attack. The Democrats had done the one thing necessary to restore party harmony. As usual Hayes was optimistic. "June 1. In the evening Swain and I called on the President who went over the ground of the situation and thinks everything is coming out right." This was in sharp contrast to the forebodings of Hoar of Massachusetts who, said Garfield, "told me that he thought we ought to issue an address signed by every Republican member of Congress warning the people against the revolution which the Democrats are threatening. He thought we ought to recommend the organization of military companies and prepare for trouble." Nothing alarming, however, emerged from the committee before the end of the session.

During the spring Garfield did not fail to speak on various matters of importance and interest. On May 11, for instance, when the measure was before the House which ultimately, nine years later, became the Interstate Commerce Law, he spoke in its favor, referring to his early efforts in that direction in 1864-1867. On May 21, in opposing a proposition to reduce the Army to 20,000 men, he called attention to the probability that the federal army might again have to be used to prevent the recurrence of such

rioting as had paralyzed railways in the great strike of 1877, when the governors of ten states appealed to Hayes for military aid. "The time may come," he said, "when we shall find it necessary to fight for society; for all who love liberty ruled by law will spring to the defense of society against anarchy, against chaos and against the red rule of the torch. To what power shall we look in that struggle to protect and save society if it be not to the Constitution and the strong arm of the National government? . . . I do therefore say boldly, while I will do as much as he who will do most to secure the rights of labor against iniquitous laws and against the assaults of capital when used unjustly, yet against all comers I am for the reign of law in this republic and for an army large enough to make it sure."¹

In June he was once more called upon to state his position on the tariff. When the Committee of Ways and Means took up the subject, his journal shows that he attended regularly and coöperated now and then with Fernando Wood, chairman of the Committee. He felt himself both drawn and repelled by the problem presented. "I am distressed," he admitted to himself, May 13, "by the curious state of conflict in my own mind upon the various phases of it. To be an extreme man is doubtless comfortable. It is painful to see too many sides to a subject." But on June 4, when he made a set speech, he had definitely come to the conclusion to oppose the whole bill. He was floor leader of the Republicans, and no longer spoke as an independent member. His party was almost solidly protectionist and if he intended to represent as well as to lead he must make due allowance for that fact. On the silver question when he split from his party he had the President back of him; but in this case no such support existed. As Garfield's last utterance upon what had been his main interest when he entered Congress fourteen years before, this speech deserves notice; and it will be seen that he stood on precisely the same premises.

A tariff, he said, should aim to create a stable equilibrium between things manufactured at home and abroad. "What

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., p. 3637.

is that stable point of equilibrium?" he asked. "In my judgment it is this; a rate so high that foreign producers cannot flood our markets and break down our home manufacturers, but not so high as to keep them out altogether, enabling our manufacturers to combine and raise the prices, nor so high as to stimulate an unnatural and unhealthy growth of manufactures. Such a tariff will be supported by the great majority of Americans." So far he had merely repeated what he had said in 1870. The difference lay in his conclusion. "We are not far from having such a tariff in our present law." This was the novelty. He admitted that "some of the existing rates on textile fabrics are exorbitant" and "some of the rates on metals could be reduced," but he found fault with the proposed rates as certain to prostrate business.¹ The next day he made the motion which kills a bill on the spot, the motion to strike out the enacting clause, and carried it by 131 to 121, a group of protectionist Democrats voting with him. A leader of the minority could hardly hope for a more dramatic form of parliamentary success.

Occasionally he gave aid to the Democrats. On June 19, just before the end, when the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill came up for passage, he wrote: "The speaker requested me to defend the appropriation of five and a half millions for the Halifax award which, he said, was to be savagely attacked by General Butler and others. It occurred to me that I could treat it as the closing act of our war diplomacy. I made some hasty notes, and spoke ten minutes very effectively. Our friends thought my speech saved the measure." It certainly deserves his words of satisfaction for it is compact, skillful and in admirable temper, persuasion at its best.²

"Mr. Speaker," he began, "I hope the members of this House will put out of their minds for a moment the question of technicality and of money and think of the tremendous fact that here, to-night, within the next twenty minutes we are to close the diplomacy of the late war. . . . It is not

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 290-294.

² *Ibid.*, p. 489.

often that any company of men is permitted by a single act to close a seventeen year series of great historical events." With this introduction he surveyed rapidly the course of Civil War diplomatic history. "We have carried every point in this war of diplomacy except the last. . . . As a matter of personal opinion, I think with the gentleman from Massachusetts [Butler] that we got the worst of it; that the award made against us is exorbitant and unreasonable. . . . But what shall I say, what shall any American say when we remember that in our career of successful diplomacy during these seventeen years we have suffered only this one comparatively small drawback? Shall we demand payment when the award is in our favor and refuse it when against us? Even gamblers pay their gambling debts, I am told. (Laughter and applause.) Fair men everywhere pay when they agree to pay. It would be infinitely disgraceful for the United States to higggle about the amount or to stand a single moment on a mere technicality. . . . I should be ashamed of my associates in this House if they should refuse to put this money in the hands of the Executive. . . . Let us close the war, so far as diplomacy is concerned by the vote we shall now give (Loud applause)."

During the summer Garfield was summoned to appear before the Potter Committee at Atlantic City on July 25 and was examined, chiefly on his relations with certain questionable witnesses who purported to have retracted their testimony of 1876 concerning "outrages," and also on his part in the "Wormley conference." Having nothing either to divulge or conceal, he was presently excused. "After adjournment," he wrote, "Potter told me my testimony was in better shape than any of the visitors' who had yet appeared before the committee." He repeated to the committee on this occasion what he had written in 1876 and 1877 in his letters and journal.

Having definitely abandoned the idea of leaving Congress for the law, Garfield had now no vacillations over accepting his renomination, which took place unanimously at Warren on August 20. He found himself in a changed constituency,

for the Democratic legislature had taken the unprecedented step of redistricting the state in 1878 for political advantage. The nineteenth district was now modified by cutting off Portage County and adding Mahoning, so that Garfield not only lost his original political base since 1856, but found the unwelcome "Iron Men" once more his constituents. He was, however, in no serious danger of any antagonism now. His position in the House and his relations with Hayes were such as to place him beyond the reach of any challenge.

Garfield took the stump both in Ohio and in Maine, devoting his principal efforts to denouncing the Greenback party which in this year made its most extensive effort to affect elections. In his own district his especial assailant of 1874, G. N. Tuttle of Painesville, emerged from obscurity to take the Greenback nomination, solely, to all appearances, for the purpose of having another chance to attack Garfield. The latter, however, treated him with contemptuous indifference. In Maine, greatly to his surprise, he found that the greenback excitement, an old story in Ohio, had just burst upon the state. He wrote to his wife (September 2): "While we were battling with it in the West New England was free from its ravages; but now, when we have almost reached specie payments, the pest has burst upon Maine like a thief in the night and no one can foretell the result. . . . It spreads among the staid citizens like a midsummer madness. . . . The old questions which I have been discussing during the past ten years are as fresh and new here as the telephone. The mysteries of this intellectual epidemic will never cease to be a wonder to me." After the end of the Ohio campaign Garfield made a short tour in western New York, following Conkling at several places. At Elmira he met the New York senator and talked half an hour. "Conkling," he commented, "is very strong, a great fighter, inspired more by his hates than his loves; desires and has followers rather than friends. He will be of more service in a minority than in a majority. In his long service he has done little constructive work."

Garfield's fears regarding Maine were realized, for that state was swept by a coalition of Democrats and Green-

backers, but elsewhere the result of the elections gave him satisfaction. "I believe I have done essential service to the cause of honest money and public faith in this campaign," he wrote on November 2. Later he added, "This election changes the face of the political sky and gives an immense impulse to business by adding confidence to the sanctity of public faith."

The vote in the nineteenth district, as modified by the substitution of Mahoning for Portage County, showed that Garfield drew about as large a proportion of the total as before. The Greenbackers seem to have repeated about what the third ticket did in 1874. Whatever the vindictive Tuttle hoped to accomplish, he failed to damage Garfield in any way.

	Garfield	Hubbard	Tuttle
Ashtabula	4,916	1,566	386
Geauga	2,208	441	247
Lake	2,161	757	528
Mahoning	3,592	2,647	1,181
Trumbull	4,289	2,142	806
	17,166	7,553	3,148

Garfield's satisfaction over the result in the country at large seems to have arisen from the fact that the Republicans carried enough states to have given them the victory had it been a presidential year. The actual situation, however, still left the Democrats in control over the House, although by a reduced margin, and in addition gave them the control over the Senate. After March 3, 1879, Hayes would confront a wholly antagonistic Congress.

Just how much this signified was not immediately apparent. The opportunities for Democratic attacks on the executive were increased, but nothing that the Potter Committee had unearthed seemed to give a plausible basis. The financial issue was practically settled, for on January 1, with no excitement and not a trace of difficulty, the Treasury "re-summed"—actually began—payment of specie on the greenbacks, and as the months went on none of the calamities

predicted by the inflationists took place. Garfield had hopes when the last session of Congress opened that attention might be focused henceforth upon the normal nonsectional subjects of legislation. On December 10, in urging early consideration of an appropriation bill, he said: "The man who attempts to get up a political excitement in this country on the old sectional basis will find himself without a party and without support. . . . The man who wants to serve his country must put himself in the line of its leading thought and that is restoration of business, trade, commerce, industry, sound political economy, honest money and honest payment of all obligations."¹

In pursuance of this ideal Garfield made a speech at Chicago, January 2, before the "honest money league," to celebrate the resumption of specie payment, a wholly nonpartisan and, what is still more remarkable, an impersonal treatment of the subject. It was the culmination of his hopes for thirteen years, the triumph of all he had labored for, and it represented most emphatically a victory of Republicans over Democrats, yet to this he did not refer.² Hinsdale wrote (January 4, 1879) criticising this speech for serious concessions, such as granting the necessity of legal tenders in war time. "What you say on silver," he added, "I wish you had left out." To him Garfield replied: "I am compelled to recognize in my public discussions, certain elements which from your situation you are not inclined to give much weight to. For example you touch upon the weak points of my Chicago address, weak as a matter of abstract doctrine yet strong in their relation to the phases and pressure of public opinion which must be temporized with to some extent in order to secure final results. I will not temporize with the truth to the extent of belying it; but I will temporize with it to the extent of postponing its discussion when postponement will aid the general cause. . . . So, in the silver question, nothing but a practical exhibition of the folly of light-weight coin will work the cure which you and I believe ought

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 128.

² *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 609.

to be wrought; and hence the passage in my speech to which you object."

As if to give Garfield an opportunity to exult over Kelley, the bill for the repeal of specie payments which the House had passed in November, 1877, and which the Senate, after long delay, had passed with amendments, came up in the regular order. Although the bill had been rendered obsolete by events, the unreconciled Kelley spoke in his usual strain, asserting that the business breakdown to be caused by resumption was now impending. Garfield made a brief and effective reply (February 22) beginning, "Mr. Speaker on this solemn occasion the embalmed remains of the old subject that we have been discussing for twelve or fifteen years and which we had supposed was laid away in its final resting place, seems suddenly to have been washed out by one of those floods that occasionally unearth graveyards and disclose the dead in their last dresses." He then humorously referred to the "calamity speeches" of Kelley and others. "They bring back memories of the Fortieth Congress, the Forty-first, the Forty-second and onward to the Forty-fifth. They sound like the old debates we heard so often that they beat themselves into our memories like the burden of a song. . . . As I sat here listening to the speeches which have just been delivered, I glanced around at my neighbors in these seats to see how they were impressed by the discussion; and I thought that I saw in their faces an expression of the same thoughts that were in my own mind—a feeling that this was a solemn postmortem debate." He then vigorously asserted and defended the success of the resumption policy, after which the bill was laid on the table by thirty-one majority. The issue was dead.¹

But Garfield's hopes for a purely business session of Congress were soon dashed, for he became aware that the Democrats were adopting, under strict caucus rule, a general policy of attacking all powers exercised by the federal government within the states beyond the necessary minimum. In dealing with a bill for federal assistance to states then suffer-

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 1784-1788.

ing from a yellow fever epidemic, Garfield, although eager to help, found himself unable to do so. "The Democrats," he observed (February 20), "are so fearful of interfering with state rights that they are unwilling the general government shall help protect them from yellow fever, unless they can degrade the nation in comparison with the state. This they shall not do with my consent." The result was that the Republican Senate refused to accept the House bill and the plan failed. Similarly a bill for the next census, drafted by F. A. Walker, who had consulted Garfield, was amended in the House so as to give the state governors, instead of the federal commissioner, the power of nominating supervisors. Garfield opposed this feature in vain, the Democrats voting solidly for it.

Finally, the goal of the Democratic policy was disclosed, when, on February 19, their party added an amendment to the General Appropriation Bill repealing the federal election laws. In the same way, voting always solidly under caucus decision, they added an amendment to the Army Appropriation Bill prohibiting the use of the army at elections. Still further, in order to prevent troublesome points of order, they had framed a new rule for the House, No. 120, which permitted amendments of any kind to an appropriation bill, provided the result was to cut down expenses. This was termed an "economy" rule, but its special purpose was obviously to enable them to attach repealing "riders" to appropriation bills. Still further, it was loudly announced by certain speakers in the Senate and House that if the Senate did not agree to these riders, then there would be no appropriation bills in this session; that if, in the next session, when both Houses would be Democratic and would pass the same riders, the President should veto them, then Congress would pass no appropriation bills. They held that, "the people" having given them a majority of both Houses, the President would be defying their will if he persisted and would be responsible for the failure of the appropriations.

Thus the Democratic majority deliberately chose to raise an issue which was certain to stir the embers of sectional

feeling, and which, if actually persisted in, would throw the whole government of the United States into confusion. In so doing, they delivered themselves into the hands of their opponents and, as will be seen, were responsible for their own defeat in 1880. Upon Garfield at this juncture rested the duty of meeting the issue and framing the party policy in the House. In the first place, he denounced and opposed from the start the rule No. 120 when, on February 6, it was used to permit the addition of a "rider" to the army bill, prohibiting the use of the army to keep peace at the polls. "It was ruled in order," he recorded, "under the nefarious rule of retrenchment which is loading appropriation bills with all sorts of general legislation."¹

In the next place, Garfield warned the Democrats that their policy would bring them disaster. Referring to his earlier statement that the people were tired of sectional wrangles he declared: "We see the dominant party in this Hall, in obedience to caucus dictation proposing to convert this House into a great electioneering machine for 1880. In plain English that is the whole meaning of this movement."² Charging that the purpose of the proposed repeal of the election law was to permit not only the suppression of the negro vote but the use of fraud in Northern cities, he concluded, "We will resist the repeal of these laws whether it take one night, two nights or all the days which this Congress lives."

It was above all essential, in Garfield's view, that the President should work in complete accord with his party in this crisis. As usual, Hayes seemed to take it lightly. "The president told me," said Garfield (February 22) "that he would veto the Legislative Appropriation bill if the clauses are added repealing the election law. He says he has recently had conversations with the Greenbackers who are elected to the next Congress and believes that they will vote against the Democrats and with us. This is another case of the President's optimism."

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1067.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1617.

The Democratic rider program was forced through in connection with three of the appropriation bills, the Republicans fighting each step with every device of parliamentary obstruction. The Senate, still Republican, rejected the riders and in this the Democratic House, in pursuance of its plan, refused to concur. After more than usually stormy and congested last days, Garfield, for his party, made a final offer to the Democrats late in the night of March 4. "About two hours after midnight," he said, "I made a speech of fifteen minutes, setting forth the stand of the two parties. . . . If an extra session is caused, it will be in consequence of the three political amendments saddled upon the appropriation bills by the Democrats. First the repeal of the Juror's Test Oath. Second. Forbidding the use of the army to keep the peace at the polls and Third, the Repeal of the Election laws to protect national elections from fraud. I proposed to give up the first two of these if the Democrats would give up the third. This they clamorously refused to do. I told them we would not surrender this just protection to the purity of the elective franchise. The Republicans in the House," he added,¹ "have followed me with great unanimity in these days of struggle."

The position taken by Garfield in this speech indicated, in general, his policy throughout the struggle which now followed. He was not concerned with defeating legislation restricting the use of the army, nor did he care about perpetuating such things as the Juror's Test Oath, which smacked of the Civil War period, but he did not intend to permit such legislation as the federal elections law to be repealed. Immediately after the session he reached an understanding with Hayes. "March 6 I told him I had heard rumors that he had expressed himself as willing to give up the Election laws, that I could not believe it to be true, and that it was due to the Republicans to be informed first if any such course was intended on his part. He answered by assuring me in the most positive terms that he was heartily with us, that perhaps it was not proper for him to have said that

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 2381.

he would veto a bill not yet before him, but that he had said to not less than twenty that he would not hesitate to veto any appropriation bill that had the repeal of the Election Laws upon it. This was altogether satisfactory." Garfield, thoroughly tired, went back to his farm for a while, feeling secure in his mind regarding the President's position.

At this point it is worth while to mention another example of coöperation between Garfield and the President in this same session. A bill was brought up (January 28) under the "previous question," which cuts off any debate, excluding all Chinese from immigration. Garfield instantly rose in opposition and asked unanimous consent "to offer an amendment that this bill shall not take effect until due notice has been given to China according to the usages of international law of the termination of the treaty against which it is a palpable and flat violation." S. S. Cox called out, "That is in the nature of debate." Garfield retorted, "My amendment will be received unless this bill is merely for party capital."¹ But Cox objected, the amendment was cut off and the bill passed 155 to 72. Later it passed the Senate, championed by Blaine. Hayes then turned to Garfield. "Feb. 23. During the day I received a note from the President asking me to call on him this evening and so at nine thirty I called. He asked me about the Chinese bill and we had a full conversation. I advised him to veto the bill and pointed out fully the iniquity of its provisions. Secretary Evarts was there and joined in the discussion. I am sure the bill will be vetoed." Later he added: "I am satisfied that Blaine has made a great mistake in his advocacy of it. At the same time I am anxious to see some legislation that shall prevent the overflow of Chinese in this country." When, on March 2, Hayes returned the bill with his veto, Garfield voted to sustain him and had the satisfaction of succeeding this time.

On March 18 the special session met, having for its main business the passage of the appropriation bills that had failed, and Garfield, having received the complimentary vote for Speaker, assumed command of his party in the House.

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 200.

Hayes's idea of some deal or combination with the Greenbackers was not countenanced by Garfield. Before going to Ohio he had told several members of the House that "we would make no trade with either Greenbackers or Democrats on the subject of the Speakership, that we could serve more effectively by being a compact independent minority, wielding a free lance and discussing measures without compromise." At the party caucus the day before the opening of the session, he repeated this doctrine, adding, "the stake for which we fight is 1880," and the Republicans went into the session standing solidly alone. Coalition with Greenbackers would have reduced the Democratic plurality to three or four only, but there was no common ground possible for Garfield and a greenback faction, on personal as well as on party considerations.

The party that Garfield took command of in this session contained most of the men who had been successful opposition leaders, except Hale of Maine, who had fallen a victim to the greenback craze. J. D. Cox, after one term, was again missing, and Foster was now a candidate for governor of Ohio. As before, Garfield could count on Conger, Reed, Frye, Hawley, Keifer, McKinley, Cannon and others to conduct an unremitting campaign and to support his leadership with loyalty and good humor. Butler was absent, and although "Pig-Iron" Kelley was still present, his power to annoy was at an end, with the resumption of specie payment. On the Democratic side the "Rebel Brigadiers,"—Gibson, Dibrell, Herbert, Mills, for instance—were getting used to the conduct of legislation and with the older men who still remained—S. S. Cox, Wood, Potter, Randall, Stephens, Knott—were prepared to meet the nagging of their assailants with less temper and more patience. So the session opened.

The history of the ensuing four months can be followed in detail in Garfield's journal, for he led nearly all the time. Purely as a technical parliamentary episode it is worthy of study, but such consideration belongs to general political or congressional history rather than to Garfield's personal

record. It will be sufficient here to note the broad outline of the positions taken by him, and the spirit and skill with which he met his arduous duties.

His first effort was to secure agreement upon a common policy between himself, the President and the party in the House. To include the Senate in this lay beyond his power, largely because at this time many of the leading Senators, such as Blaine and Conkling, had broken off all personal relations with the President, owing to his attitude on patronage, and declined to let his opinions influence their conduct in any respect. Garfield's journal shows that he agreed in advance with Hayes that they should plant themselves squarely on the ground that they "would not even go into the merits of the election laws on the appropriation bill. The question would be the effort of Congress to coerce the President." To reach this he had to oppose a suggestion of Evarts that they should announce a readiness to abandon part of the election machinery. On March 23 rumors were afloat that Hayes had agreed to just such a course, but the next day, after a "confidential conversation," Garfield reiterated in the journal, "I am perfectly satisfied that he will stand firmly with us in the struggle now preparing." On March 27 the Republican caucus agreed on this program and the next day the battle began, with everything, even the veto, planned in advance. March 28 the journal runs, "While I was at breakfast the President called and read me the rough draft of his veto message of the Army appropriation bill, stating briefly the grounds of opposition and asking my advice on several points."

Garfield's opening gun was fired in a speech of March 29, which was intended to force the Democrats into a position impossible of maintenance without ruin to their party.¹ His language was intentionally grave and menacing in character. "I have no hope," he said, "of being able to convey to the members of this House my own conviction of the very great gravity and solemnity of the crisis which this decision of the Chair and of the Committee of the Whole has brought upon

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 115-118.

this country. I wish I might be proved a false prophet. . . . But no view I have ever taken has entered more deeply into my convictions than this; that this House has to-day resolved to enter upon a revolution against the Constitution of the United States." To prove his point he read extracts from the speeches of Beck and Thurman to prove that unless the President consented to allow the passage of the appropriation bills with the riders, the House would refuse to make any appropriations. He then laid forth with great clearness the extent to which the orderly running of the government depended upon the willingness of the people, acting through legislatures of states and through Congress, to take the necessary action. A mere refusal to act in any one of many places could destroy the government within a few weeks.

"Now," he said, "for the first time . . . it is proposed and insisted upon that these voluntary powers shall be used for the destruction of the Government. . . . The program announced to the American people today is this; that if this House can not have its way in certain matters not connected with appropriations, it will so use or refrain from using its voluntary powers as to destroy the Government." Passing then to the existing army clause itself, he dwelt upon the fact that it had been voted for in 1865 by most of the Democrats, including many who were still in Congress. In conclusion, he stated his position in vigorous words: "We are ready to pass these bills for the support of the government at any hour when you will offer them in the ordinary way by the methods prescribed by the Constitution. If you offer those other propositions of legislation as separate measures we will meet you in the fraternal spirit of fair debate and will discuss their merits. Some of your measures many of us will vote for in separate bills. But you shall not coerce any independent branch of this Government even by the threat of starvation to consent to surrender its voluntary powers until the question has been appealed to the sovereign and decided in your favor. On this ground we plant ourselves and here we will stand to the end."¹

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., p. 118.

This speech called forth a series of replies from the Democrats, all of which, as Garfield said, "misstated my position and overshot the mark." After waiting until they had said their say, he again took the floor, April 4, and demonstrated that none of them had faced the charge he made, that it would be revolutionary to refuse to pass any appropriation unless with the rider, but had wasted their time proving that riders were not revolutionary—something which he had never asserted. It is impossible to read this speech without admiration of the skill and solidity of argument shown and the strength and moderation of tone. It was the kind of thing where Garfield appeared at his very best. All of it would be well worth quoting, but perhaps the passage in which he referred to Tucker's threat to destroy the army by refusing appropriations may serve to illustrate his skill. The subject was one on which Garfield ten years before would have poured forth a stream of denunciatory eloquence. On this occasion he made his point in a few condensed sentences.

"If he goes to the people," he said, "with the proposition to let the Army be annihilated on the 30th day of July next unless the President, contrary to his sense of duty, contrary to his conscience, shall sign whatever Congress may send him, we will debate it in the forum of every patriotic heart and will abide the result. If the party which after eighteen years of banishment from power has come back as the gentleman from Kentucky said to its 'birthright of power,' is to signalize its return by striking down the gallant and faithful Army of the United States, the people of this country will not be slow to understand that there are reminiscences of that Army which these gentlemen would willingly forget, by burying both the Army and the memories of its great service to the Union in one grave. (Applause.)"¹

The army bill, with its rider prohibiting the use of the army at the polls, passed the House April 5, and then the battle opened in the Senate. Garfield went into the gallery to hear both Blaine and Conkling. Of the former's speech he said (April 14), "It was very forcible and aggressive and

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 241-244.

will read well as a popular presentation of the case but I do not see that he has added any new points to the discussion already had in the House." Ten days later he heard Conkling's speech on the same subject. "It was a very strong and complete presentation of our views and entirely in accord with the position I took in my first speech. The senator's self-consciousness is always apparent and I think it marred the effectiveness of his speech. He spoke from notes without reading and when he completed the sheet of notes, tore it up into small bits and threw them on the floor, taking some time to do it. He also held considerable *sotto voce* conferences with those around him. These little touches of self-consciousness detract from the effectiveness of his speaking. The more a man loses himself in his work, the better for the work. But notwithstanding these minor defects, his speech was very powerful and valuable. There were some extraordinarily strong passages."

The Army Appropriation Bill was forced through the Senate April 25 and vetoed four days later. Garfield "called on the President and had a full conference on the subject. He gave me an advance copy of his veto message to enable me to prepare for its defence. . . . Spent the evening in reading up veto literature." When the vote was taken, May 1, all debate was cut off so he had no chance to defend the President on this measure. Since the Democratic majority was only eleven, there was no possibility of passing the bill over the veto.

The next appropriation bill was the general one, which was before the House from April 1 to 26 and contained a rider repealing the federal election laws. On the day of the final vote, Garfield took the floor again to taunt the Democrats with their dangerous threat which they dared not actually carry out. "I took upon myself," he said, "a grave responsibility in the opening of this debate. . . . I took a great risk when I made this charge against you as a party. . . . It was in your power to ruin me in the estimation of fair-minded patriotic men by the utterance of one sentence. . . . You could have said, 'We wish to pass our measures of

legislation in reference to elections, juries and the use of the army, and we will do so if we can do it constitutionally; but if we cannot get these measures in accordance with the constitution, we will pass the appropriation bills like loyal Representatives, go home and make the appeal to the people.'

. . . Forty-five of you have spoken. Forty-five of you have deluged the ear of this country with debate, and that sentence has not been spoken by a single one of you. On the contrary, by your silence as well as by your affirmation, you have made my accusation overwhelmingly true. And there I leave the controversy. The assaults upon my speech have been from the beginning to the end, evasions of the issue. What have you said? Not less than thirty of you, in spite of my plain and emphatic declarations to the contrary, have insisted that I said it was revolutionary to put a rider on an appropriation bill, a thing that no man on this side of the House has said."¹

The bill then went to the Senate, where it remained for several weeks, not passing until May 20. Meanwhile the Democrats determined to test the President's position by offering a separate bill restricting the possible use of the army at elections, and the Republican House caucus, in a temporary absence of Garfield, voted to oppose it. On returning he said (May 6): "I doubted the wisdom of any strenuous opposition. . . . Considering the measure as part of the political programme of the Democratic party the President ought to veto it, but after his commitments on the general subject in his former veto he will find himself embarrassed." The bill passed both houses in three days and came before the President. Garfield now exerted himself to keep the President in line with the House (May 10).

"I stated the grounds of my opposition to the bill, that while it pretends to prevent the use of the troops in conducting an election, it really prevents the use of the army in any part of the United States at any place where an election is being held. I was glad to find the President in full accord with this view. He read me a sketch of the points he had

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., p. 946.

already made and I came away satisfied that we should have a veto very soon." "I spent an hour with the President yesterday," he wrote his wife (May 10), "on the veto. I think I have never had so much intellectual and personal influence over him as now. He is fully in line with his party." When the veto came, May 12, Garfield said, "It was by far the ablest state paper which President Hayes has ever produced so far as I know."

Garfield's position was not easily comprehensible to persons unused to House procedure and the niceties of legislation, and he found himself criticised by his mentor, Hinsdale, for extravagance of language and undue partisanship in temper. What Hinsdale objected to was his use of the word "revolution" to describe the Democratic threats. On April 9 he explained this clearly, saying that the ordinary reader would get the idea that Garfield was calling the adoption of a rider "revolutionary," which was far too extreme a word to use. Hinsdale's conclusion was that the Republicans were merely using the rider issue for party capital.

This was earnestly contested by Garfield (May 20). "Our recent history has developed a 'war-horse' type of Republican which I agree with you in despising, as a permanent element; but I do not agree with you that the present agitation is an attempt on the part of the Republicans to get up a new cry. *We* did not get up the cry. *We* did not bring in this new issue. . . . Not to have resisted this scheme would have been criminal on our part. It is true that in resisting it the 'war-horse' type of Republican has found new employment; and many of the undesirable elements of our party are delighted that this issue has been raised. But it is not just to say that Republicans have raised the issue to feed their taste for 'gore.'"

The unfortunate result of the contest was that passion had been stirred and now the Democrats found it impossible to withdraw from the issue they had raised. "I shall not be surprised," he wrote (May 24), "if I am kept here far into the summer. The fact is, the Democrats have gone so far that it is nearly, if not quite as ruinous for them to recede

from the position they have taken as to go forward. They have not the courage to do either; and I see less reason to hope for an early adjournment than at any previous period of the session. . . . Men are getting to be in fear of their party. They have aroused the stubbornness of their constituents to such a pitch that they do not now dare to resist the phantom they have created."

During May Garfield was disgusted at the recurrence of the silver question when a bill for free coinage was brought up and passed. On May 9 he wrote, "I feel too weary to go over the old hackneyed question, but it seems to be necessary," and when he had a chance to make a five-minute speech he showed his usual vigor by saying, "If we want to take rank with China and part company with all the civilized nations of the western world we can by passing this bill."¹ "The brainless and dangerous" bill finally passed the House, only to die in the Senate.

The contest over riders was resumed in June, after the General Appropriation Bill had been vetoed by Hayes, May 29. The Democrats, abandoning the threat to refuse appropriations, passed the general bill, but made one further effort in the direction of the army by passing an Army Appropriation Bill with the proviso that no money should be appropriated for troops used as a police force at the polls. At this point, Garfield feeling it necessary to preserve unity between President and party and knowing that the President was bound by his previous utterances to sign the bill, undertook to induce his party in the House to let it go through. It called for all his leadership.

"Yesterday was a great field day in the House," he wrote to his wife (June 12), "and brought greater risks and graver responsibilities upon me than any I have yet met this session. For three days Conkling and several other senators (who prefer a breach between the President and his party rather than harmony) attempted to influence the House to vote against the last army bill, when the great majority of Republicans in the House thought we surrendered nothing

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., p. 1444.

by voting for it, and all knew that the President is bound by his previous veto messages to sign it. In the first place I prevented the calling of a joint caucus, which would have allowed the Senators to make converts to their views among House Republicans—and yesterday I made a speech reviewing the fight thus far and showing that we could safely vote for the bill and closed by declaring that I would vote for it. The result was that it passed by a vote of 172 to 31—and of the 31 who voted against, 18 were leading Democrats who admitted that it was a surrender by their party and only 12 Republicans voted against it, and none of them were very prominent men.”

In the Senate, where the leaders cared nothing for Hayes's position, the Republicans made a stubborn resistance, of which Garfield thoroughly disapproved. “Conkling and his set,” he wrote to Hinsdale (June 23), “prefer to quarrel with the President rather than have him in accord with his party, and so have raised a storm which developed great extremes of opinion between them and the Democrats, and finally all the Republican senators except Burnside cast their votes against the Army bill. I have gone over the case thoroughly with the President and he concurs with my views and I think that without doubt he will sign the army bill. . . . Of course the people have lost their interest in the original phase of the controversy from which the Democrats have retreated. Thurman, Beck and Blackburn have been gradually abandoning their first position.” After the bill had passed the Senate, it went to Hayes and, as Garfield had predicted, he signed it. He commented in the journal (June 23): “This signing of the military bill is a signal triumph. . . . In the long run I have no doubt my position on this question will receive general approval, although I ran some risk in assuming it.”

The last phase of the contest was an effort by the Democrats to prevent the execution of the federal election laws by the United States marshals by prohibiting any payments for services in connection with elections. Hayes stood stiffly ready with his veto, blocking the first such bill on June 23,

and the second on July 30. Just before the last, Garfield and Townsend called on the President, urging him, if the Democrats adjourned without making any appropriations for marshals, not to call another extra session for fear of bringing on general legislation. "I think I persuaded him that it would be unwise," he wrote to his wife. The journal also shows that Garfield suggested one of the sentences in the veto message. "'These marshals are in fact the only police force of the Government.' He immediately wrote it in." On July 1 the two Houses adjourned, leaving the marshals unpaid as the only outcome of all the threats of the preceding winter. In Garfield's eyes it was a virtual victory. "The extra session," he wrote Hinsdale (July 7), "has united the Republican party more than anything since 1868 and it bids fair to give us 1880."

There can be little doubt that in the session thus ended Garfield scored a success as a strong and yet a moderate and good-tempered leader. He carried his majority with him, constantly exhibited not only himself but his whole party in a reasonable position and compelled the Democrats, time after time, to make it perfectly clear by their votes that what they wanted was a political and partisan victory over Hayes. They wished to coerce him, as a personal matter. That Garfield did this is a marked tribute to his leadership, for under the circumstances there can be no doubt that it would have been the easiest thing to fight everything offered by the Democrats indiscriminately and to yield not an inch on any basis. Garfield was criticised by the extreme partisans for his willingness to let the army bill through. To such no Democratic measure, no matter what, was fit to support. "I have known men," says Hoar,¹ "who knew him very well say that when he led the House on the Republican side and had led his party into a position which excited sharp conflict, they could never be sure that he would not get wrong at the last moment or have some private understanding with the Democrats and leave his own side in the lurch." This may well express the view of a fighting partisan to whom the sole

¹ Hoar, *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 399.

consideration was to beat the Democrats under any and all circumstances and regardless of the question under consideration. But no one can follow Garfield's course as leader or as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations without seeing that his interest was not so much in beating the Democrats as in securing results of the kind he thought best, and especially in giving the President solid support.

By the summer and autumn of 1879 the time had come for Garfield again to consider the question of his political future. From all sides he found himself under actual pressure to step out and up from his House leadership to what were considered higher places. It was impossible, men felt, that with his powers as orator, debater and party leader, he should be content to stay in the House. The first position almost to be thrust upon him was that of candidate for the governorship of Ohio. For this Garfield was just as unready in 1879 as he had been on several previous occasions, and by writing letter after letter he succeeded in blocking the demand of the state leaders for his services as an inspiring campaign spokesman. On March 25 he wrote to Grosvenor of the state committee, "I have constantly refused and do refuse to become a candidate for the Governorship." Of the way in which this nomination was connected with the question of the presidency more will be said in a later chapter. Here it suffices to note that the state convention on May 28 relieved Garfield's anxieties by nominating Charles Foster.

The next position was that of the senatorship, and here also the problem of the presidency was involved. When Garfield went back to Ohio after the adjournment he carried what appeared to be a political offer from Secretary Sherman. The journal of July 1 reports this conversation: "Dined with Secretary Sherman and then drove with him far out into Maryland. He talked very freely on the political situation and his prospects for the Presidency. I think he is deeply committed to the hope of being nominated. He said he was not a candidate for the Ohio senatorship and had no doubt I would be chosen by a large majority in case we carried the legislature." What Sherman wanted was evidently

to get the support for his presidential aspirations of a man so prominent in Ohio politics as Garfield. It left clear for Garfield the way to the Senate. He refused, according to his custom, to make any public statement on the subject and went through the campaign debating solely party issues.

It was the usual severe stumping for Garfield, from August 25 to October 13. He spoke for a week in Maine, returned to Ohio and, after the end of the state campaign, spoke a few times in New York and once in Massachusetts. "I have had three great meetings," he wrote home (November 2), "and have been exceedingly well received but I am glad it is over." The result in Ohio was satisfactory.

Foster (Republican)	Ewing (Democrat)	Senate	House
336,261	319,132	21-15	69-45

This made certain the election of a Republican Senator to succeed Mathews. During the campaign Garfield, in spite of his silence, was regarded as a senatorial candidate. On September 19 he wrote to his wife from Adams County: "The audience rose and gave me three cheers for the next U. S. Senator. This has happened several times on my trip." After the campaign was over and it was known that the Republicans had carried the legislature, the matter could no longer be evaded. Garfield must decide once and finally whether he would stand for the Senate or remain permanently in the House. So with great reluctance and the sense of being almost a victim of circumstances Garfield laid aside his life-long habits and decided to make an open and businesslike campaign for the Senate.

His journal shows that on October 21 and 22 the management was taken in hand by three men, Dr. W. S. Streator, N. B. Sherwin of Cleveland and Captain C. E. Henry, who had long been his personal agent in election matters. To these Austin, of course, was added, Garfield relying as much as ever on his sagacity and clear-headedness in matters of this kind. Garfield's feelings were well set forth in his journal. "If I were to act on my own choice," he wrote (October 21), "without reference to influences, I would remain in the

House of Representatives. But I have resolved to be a candidate for the U. S. Senate for these reasons. *First.* I am, and as leader of the House shall continue to be too hard-worked, and am likely to break down under its weight. *Second.* There are many good men in my District who will think it selfish in me to keep them out of the House when I have a fair chance of promotion. *Third.* I once gave way at the request of the President, and a few fellows of the baser sort said I was afraid to risk my strength in the larger field of the Senate. If I should decline now, I should lose still more in this direction."

The situation as he saw it at the time was this: "Nearly or quite thirty members elect to the general assembly during the late campaign have voluntarily tendered me their support, and several others have done so since. The Cincinnati end of the state will do what it can against me. Taft, Mathews and perhaps Young and Eggleston will be candidates. In the center my friend Governor Dennison is a candidate. On personal grounds I regret this. In July last Sherman assured me he was not and would not be a candidate and to that position I think he will adhere. Foster will keep his faith as a friend; and unless no new phase presents itself I shall have no serious opposition. If money is to be used, if the senatorship is to be bought, I am not a purchaser. But I do not think it is for sale."

Garfield's part in the canvass was purely advisory, but his letters and journal show that he kept in the closest touch with his managers. The one thing he would not do was to take any personal part; this was the scruple persisting from his lifelong practice. "I feel greatly averse," he wrote (October 22), "to doing anything about it myself. I feel that my services should speak for themselves, rather than that I should speak for them or of them." He did, however, take a step in reference to Sherman which was almost unique in his career, as it approximated a political bargain. On November 23 he recorded: "Mr. Moulton of Cincinnati [John Sherman's brother-in-law] . . . came to tell me he will do what he can to secure my election to the United States

Senate. I gave him to understand that my course towards Sherman's candidacy for the presidency would depend, in part, upon his conduct towards me in the pending contest. Indeed, I had said this some time ago and perhaps this visit is a result." This ensured Sherman's benevolent neutrality.

By the middle of November the future seemed certain. Garfield wrote Austin (November 14): "I think there is a clear majority of the legislature for me. Foster and I looked the list over carefully and made out 52 out of the 90 Republican members who appear to be for me. This list does not include any of the doubtful." All that was necessary was to keep informed of the efforts of rival candidates and see that no dangerous attacks were made. As the time of the election approached his managers were insistent that he should go in person to Columbus; but this he absolutely refused to do, and he laid strict limitations upon the methods to be adopted by his managers. "I hope it will not be necessary for me to go to Columbus at all," he wrote Austin (November 26); "I do not think I could by any possibility ask a man to vote for me; and how anybody else has done so is more than I can understand." In a final conference at Cleveland before the meeting of the legislature he said (December 31) "I allowed rooms to be taken at the Neil House and cigars to be kept for visitors but no liquors of any kind, no offer of offices nor anything to any member for his support." On January 3 he recorded, "All looks well and I think I shall be nominated on the first ballot."

Things went even better than he expected, for at the Republican caucus all his rivals successively withdrew, Denison first, then Mathews and Taft, and he was nominated by acclamation. He wrote in his journal: "I believe the event of last evening is without a parallel in the history of the state. It leaves me untrammelled by any commitments or complications with any member of the legislature." After the actual election, January 13, he went to Columbus and was given a reception in the Senate chamber by the governor and members of the legislature and other friends. "Went to the chamber which I had not entered before for eighteen years,"

he wrote; "about 1200 to 1500 people were present." Congratulated and praised by the Republican press of the state, he returned to Washington to receive equally hearty felicitations from political friends and colleagues in both houses. His desk was piled high with letters.

But Garfield turned from vociferous congratulations of politicians and newspapers to his one earliest political friend. "You may be assured," he wrote to Harmon Austin (January 11), "that amidst the hundreds of letters and telegrams I have received since the sixth inst. the congratulations of no man are dearer to me than yours. Time cannot weaken the strength of my gratitude for the judicious and unwavering friendship with which you have stood by me in days of darkness and hours of triumph."

While this election marked in Garfield's mind the culmination of his political career, he felt about it the same mixture of regret and uncertainty which always tinged any decision on his part to make a break with the past. He wrote to Hinsdale (January 28): "I go into the unknown and the untried; and I have this premonition that the Senate is composed of old men whose ideas and opinions are crystallized into fixed and well-nigh unchangeable forms and they are much less likely to be impressed by anything that may be said to them, than are the members of the House. Furthermore a decided majority of all my associates who have gone from the House to the Senate have been measurably lost in its silence, I may be of that number. Again I am told that personal antagonisms and jealousies prevail to a far greater extent in that body than in the House and that there are comparatively few frank and cordial friendships among senators. On the whole and on many accounts I shall leave the House with great regret and enter the Senate with many doubts. On the other hand, I am inspired by what is a pardonable ambition to test myself in that new field and its associations. But I think I am willing to take whatever rank my merits fairly deserve even though it be a low one."

Although Senator-elect, Garfield still had two full sessions of the House before him, and he continued in his place as

leader of the Republican minority. But the session of 1879-1880 proved as quiet and uncombative as the previous one had been contentious. He wrote in the journal (December 19): "On the whole this session thus far has been the most meek and stupid of any I have known. The late elections have greatly subdued the spirit of the Democracy and they have not yet determined what their plans for the future are to be." The matter in which Garfield took the greatest interest was the consideration and adoption of a new code of rules for the House which he was so soon to leave, which he had had a hand in drafting. The Committee on Rules had been authorized to prepare a revision, and on August 14-18 Garfield had played his part in a meeting at Long Branch.

To a veteran Congressman such as Garfield had now become, the management of the rules of the House grows to be an intellectual study, quite analogous to such a game as chess, which develops an absorbing preoccupation. In reading the *Globe* it is easy to note the Congressmen to whom the employment of the rules to further or block legislation is the main interest, speaking or arguing wholly secondary or even absent. With Garfield the manipulation of the rules never reached the stage of the first importance, but it is manifest that he took great interest in it, an interest rapidly increasing when he assumed responsibility as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and found his success to a large degree dependent upon his skill in making motions and employing the rules to aid himself or defeat attacks. When he became a member of the minority with no responsibility, the full significance of the use of the rules as party tools became evident. He became increasingly interested in points of order and rulings of the chair, and took frequent occasions to study the philosophy of any new or original use of them. In the fighting sessions of 1878 and 1879 he constantly employed them and developed the real virtuoso's delight in any keen or subtle motions. By this time he was generally recognized as a past master in the art of handling the House rules.

Two cases, for example, were mentioned in the journal for

1875 when Garfield made skillful but unusual employment of the rules. On February 23 he aided Dawes out of a bad situation with the tax bill. "About four oclock it had become so overladen with amendments that he moved to strike out the enacting clause and thus report it to the House, and was about to have it recommitted to his Committee with instructions to report it back so amended, when I told him he would lose the bill. I said let them put on whatever amendments they choose, report it to the House and move a substitute which he did a little after five oclock."¹ On March 2 he was himself similarly embarrassed with the Deficiency Bill. "After a long and hard struggle with all sorts of objections and amendments, finding so many amendments were offered as to make it almost impossible to get the bill out of Committee, I got the bill through by a coup d'etat. I moved in the House to discharge the Committee from further consideration of the bill, to bring it before the House with all the pending amendments and pass it. This was done under a suspension of the rules at one vote."² Consequently the task of revision appealed strongly to him, and his journal shows with what zest he collaborated with his colleagues.

The committee consisted of the Speaker, S. J. Randall, Blackburn, Alexander H. Stephens and Frye of Maine, besides Garfield, and all politics laid aside they worked rapidly and in good humor to condense and codify the rules. The following extract from the journal will illustrate the way they worked and the delicacy of the points Garfield enjoyed. "Aug. 15. Mr. Blackburn and I were appointed a sub-committee to report upon the several motions and their order of precedence. I spent some time in determining the precise difference between privileged questions and questions of privilege. I came to the conclusion that privileged questions are questions relating to the privileges of the House and the rank of priority which such questions hold, but questions of privilege are questions affecting the rights of members. In short the first class are public questions, the

¹ *Cong. Record*, 43 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1662.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2124.

others are personal questions relating to the rights of membership."

During all the consideration of the rules by the House Garfield worked harmoniously with his Democratic colleagues, aiding in their adoption, until the so-called "retrenchment" provision was encountered, which the Democrats out of consistency felt compelled to continue. Garfield led his party in a stiff fight against it, but after it had been voted by the Democratic majority, he then announced his purpose of voting for the final adoption of the rules, in words that were an epitome of his political reasonableness (March 2). "I think it is a valuable trait in any man's judgment of affairs to be able to know when he is beaten," he observed. "Now, therefore, never believing in continuing a fight merely for the sake of a fight . . . and desiring to get what good there is in the rules, I . . . believe we should come to an immediate vote."¹

When the rules went into effect, Garfield watched their operation with the satisfaction of a connoisseur, but presently found himself again obliged to undertake a fight against the same "rider" policy which had been the subject of the preceding session. When the unpaid salaries of the marshals were brought forward in the deficiency bill, the Democrats again offered the proviso that had wrecked the bill in the summer. In opposing this Garfield made considerable use of the recent decisions of the Supreme Court, which upheld the constitutionality of the Federal Elections Laws (*ex parte Siebold*), demanding that the majority cease trying to defeat the execution of a valid law. Fastening with some severity upon the remark of a Democrat who declined to be influenced by the Supreme Court he said (March 17):

"We who are the sworn law-makers of the nation, and ought to be examples of respect for and obedience to the law—we who before we took our first step in legislation, swore before God and our country that we would support the supreme law of the land,—we are now invited to become conspicuous leaders in the violation of law. My colleague

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1256.

announces his purpose to break the law and invites Congress to follow him in his assault upon it. . . . And I therefore appeal to gentlemen on the other side to prevent a disaster which their party leaders are preparing, not for themselves alone but for our common country. I hope before this day is over we may . . . cast out of these halls the dregs of that unfortunate and crazy extra session.”¹ He then offered—not as leader but on his sole responsibility—a proposal to take the special deputy marshals out of politics by having them appointed by circuit judges in equal numbers from both parties, but when the Democrats adopted this as a rider he voted against the bill on that ground. Here again he stood with Hayes against the more extreme members of his party. “The president,” he wrote, “approved of the speech I made in regard to the marshals but he will veto the bill on the ground of its being a rider. The message is already written although the bill had not yet reached him.”

Garfield’s purpose in making this proposal was partly, as he said, to check the appearance of a radical temper in his party which he considered “unreasonable and dangerous,” but he did it at the cost of being considered “unsound.” Yet his object throughout was primarily to give loyal support to the President and the coöperation of the two men was complete and hearty. A further example appeared when, on May 20, the Senate passed a bill embodying part of Garfield’s proposal but not satisfying him. “The president called,” Garfield wrote, “to consult with me in regard to the bill for the appointment of marshals which passed the Senate yesterday. I told him I should resist the bill and pointed out the grounds of my opposition, but was willing to offer a substitute that I could support. He said he had come in hopes that we could get together and was glad to find that our views were in accord. He read me a rough draft of a veto which he had already prepared. I suggested some additional points which he adopted.” This was the veto message later sent in by President Hayes on June 15.

Issue was also joined on Democratic amendments to the

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 1638-1640.

army bill which were so framed as to meet Hayes's known views, and Garfield again exerted himself to keep the party in line with the President. April 6: "The Republican caucus committee of nine met and consulted on what they should do. I insisted that we ought not to vote against the rider on its merits but only on account of its being a rider. We came to a conclusion as far as an agreement could be had." When the bill came up Garfield opposed it on May 8, with a speech, and with the usual parliamentary motions; but the whole contest was more or less perfunctory and the fury and tension of the preceding session were wholly absent.

Garfield left the House May 25, before the struggle over the various riders was finished, never to return; and since he had no idea that he was terminating his legislative service he uttered no valedictory and wrote no reflections in his journal or letters. Of his Congressional career, taken as a whole, it will be worth while to speak at length in the following chapter; here it may be noted that from 1877 to 1880 he had played the part assigned him, that of party leader and supporter of the President, with conspicuous fidelity and good temper. Through long experience in any field comes wisdom. One feels in this last session of Garfield's a sort of inner calmness and tolerance in his utterances and attitude. The ambitious dreams of 1863 were far in the past—the hopes of reforming the fiscal system once for all; the eagerness to espouse every good cause and go down fighting if need be. On the other hand, there had come patience, far-sighted willingness to secure small gains and defeat small errors and a certain easy enjoyment of the Congressional game. The veteran who could play on the House like an instrument rarely put forth his whole power, being content to let younger members do the fighting. With him there departed from the House a strong influence for courtesy, reasonableness and sound legislative methods, as well as an orator and tactician of unsurpassed skill. His place was to be taken by another race of men, the Reeds and Cannons, more business-like, possibly of firmer fiber, but not so generous nor so fair-minded.

When Garfield left the House of Representatives in May, 1880, he was in reality terminating the significant part of his career, that stretch of twenty years in which, under fair conditions, he was enabled to play just such a part as his endowments, his training and his personal abilities could achieve. As legislator, volunteer soldier and again as parliamentarian he emphatically made his own way, and whatever success he achieved or failures he incurred could be laid to no other cause than his own merits or shortcomings. Before passing, then, to the narrative of the altogether exceptional and utterly different circumstances in which he was to live the last year and a half of his life, it is fitting to pause and consider what manner of man he was at this, the end of his long Congressional service.

CHAPTER XIX

GARFIELD AS A PUBLIC MAN

ALTHOUGH Garfield's career was far from closed when he left Washington in May, 1880, yet so fragmentary was the final stage that it may be treated as an episode, an exciting and dramatic one, but still a mere beginning. As Blaine very truly said in his memorial address of 1882:¹ "The great measure of Garfield's fame was filled by his service in the House of Representatives. His military life, illustrated by honorable performance and rich in promise, was, as he felt himself, prematurely terminated and necessarily incomplete. Speculation as to what he might have done in a field where the great prizes are so few, cannot be profitable. As a lawyer, though admirably equipped for the profession, he can scarcely be said to have entered on its practice. The few efforts he made at the bar were distinguished by the same high order of talent which he exhibited on every field where he was put to the test, and if a man may be accepted as a competent judge of his own capacities and adaptations, the law was the profession to which Garfield should have devoted himself. But fate ordained otherwise and his reputation in history will rest largely upon his service in the House of Representatives."

In the preceding chapters, this service in the House has been followed from its beginning to its conclusion and the record of its legislative and political achievements has been set forth in as much detail as space would permit. There is no need to review it here, but it may be well to pause and consider what in the eyes of his contemporaries was the quality of his service, the measure of his leadership, taking into account not only the laudatory estimates but also the criticisms passed upon him. In all these, it may be said that

¹ Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 123, 47 Cong., 1 sess., quoted as "Eulogy," p. 27.

nothing new will be encountered, nothing with which the reader of the foregoing chapters will not be already familiar, but it is none the less worth while to gather together the utterances of those who attempted to analyze him, as an illustration of the impression he produced upon the men who worked with him.

First and foremost stood the impression of intellectual breadth and thoroughness in Garfield's handling of all congressional problems. Blaine said:¹ "As a debater on an issue squarely joined, where the position had been chosen and the ground laid out, Garfield must be assigned a very high rank. More, perhaps, than any man with whom he was associated in public life, he gave careful and systematic study to public questions, and he came to every discussion in which he took part with elaborate and complete preparation. He was a steady and indefatigable worker. Those who imagine that talent or genius can supply the place or achieve the results of labor will find no encouragement in Garfield's life. In preliminary work he was apt, rapid and skillful. He possessed in a high degree the power of readily absorbing ideas and facts, and, like Dr. Johnson, had the art of getting from a book all that was of value in it by a reading apparently so quick and cursory that it seemed like a mere glance at the table of contents."

"When in Congress," said Banks,² "he would frequently occupy a whole night in examination of questions to be considered the next day and debate them as if nothing unusual had occurred." Sometimes, of course, he had no chance to debate them, no matter how well prepared. In an interesting letter to Hinsdale (April 21, 1880) Garfield shows how far this desire for thorough preparation carried him, when he was floor leader for his party. "I share your regret," he wrote, "that I am so much absorbed in political work, but the position I hold in the House requires an enormous amount of surplus work. I am compelled to look ahead at questions likely to be sprung upon us for action and the fact

¹ "Eulogy," p. 29.

² Eulogy in City of Boston, *Memorial of James A. Garfield*, p. 62.

is I prepare for debate on ten subjects when I actually take part in but one. For example, it seemed certain that the Fitz-John Porter case would be discussed in the House and I devoted the best part of two weeks to a careful re-examination of the old material and a study of the new. There is now lying on the top of my book case a pile of books, reports and manuscript, three feet long by a foot and a half high which I accumulated and examined for a debate which certainly will not come off this session and perhaps not at all. I must stand in the breach to meet whatever question comes."

A marked feature of this preparation was Garfield's endeavor to discover not only the pertinent facts from reliable sources, but the best expert opinion on the subject. In his speeches he constantly quoted the judgments of scholars, scientists, earlier statesmen, business men, manufacturers, bankers,—of any whose opinions were presumably bound to be respected. Banks, in his eulogy refers to this habit, saying: "He liked it to be understood that he was abreast of the best thought of the time; he had a high regard for the authority of scientific leaders, and walked with reverential respect in the tracks of the best thinkers of the age. It is a pleasant thing, this method of settling all problems by demonstration of exact science."¹

In this connection it may be well to add that Garfield not only showed his respect for a scientific use of facts as the basis for legislation in speeches on the census and in defense of Wells against Kelley, but on many other occasions stated his creed with great clearness. On July 9, 1866, for instance, in supporting the appropriation for the Bureau of Statistics he pointed out how in Great Britain, owing to the excellent system of statistics, it was possible to base legislation on facts. "Now," he continued, "when I am asked to say whether the tariff on a given article shall be ten per cent or a hundred per cent, I want to know . . . where it is produced, whether we can produce it or not, what price it bears in the market, what capital is invested in producing it. But now I

¹ Eulogy in City of Boston, *Memorial of James A. Garfield*, p. 62.

am compelled to come here with empty hands—it was only the other day that I called upon the Librarian and kept him busily at work for half an hour to find for me the market price of nickel, and he could not find in it any of our books.”¹ Fourteen years later (January 13, 1880), in defending an appropriation for books for committee use, he said, “If the Committee on Ways and Means is to have the proper tools to use on this most delicate and difficult and important subject of taxation then they ought to have a complete ‘kit of tools,’ so to speak, at their hand ready for immediate use.”²

E. V. Smalley, in an article on “Characteristics of Garfield,”³ described his methods as committee chairman. “When he was at the head of a committee to prepare a bill for taking the ninth census, he studied the history of every census taken in this or any other country . . . and then, getting his committee together, one hot vacation season, selected a cool room in the basement of the Capitol and much to their annoyance opened what might have been a school for the study of the science of statistics. What his fellow-members had dreaded as a dry and perfunctory affair, he converted into a symposium of instructive research and discussion. I think they will all agree that the weeks they spent with General Garfield in the census work were among the most valuable and the most agreeable of their Congressional career.” In the preceding Congress, when chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, he made a similar study of the needs of the army “ranging in his inquiries all the way from the authority and functions of the general commanding to the dealings of the post-traders with the private soldiers.” “As the result of his work on the Appropriations Committee I doubt,” said Smalley, “whether there was ever a man in Congress who understood so completely all the ramifications of the vast machinery of the Federal Government. I remember a conversation with him soon after he was appointed to the chairmanship, ‘No wheel, no shaft, no rivet in our gov-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3694.

² *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 2 sess., p. 298.

³ *Century Magazine*, December, 1881, p. 168.

ernmental machinery performs its functions without money,' he said. 'If I find out where every dollar goes and how it is used, I shall understand the apparatus thoroughly and know if there are useless or defective parts.' He made the committee room a class-room for studying the practical workings of all the functions of federal administration."

The effect of this careful preparation upon Garfield's speeches was to give them a character of unique solidity and importance. "No one," said Blaine¹ "of the generation of public men to which he belonged has contributed so much that will prove valuable for future reference. His speeches are numerous, many of them brilliant, all of them well-studied, carefully phrased and exhaustive of the subject under consideration. Collected from the scattered pages of ninety royal octavo volumes of the *Congressional Record*, they would present an invaluable compendium of the political events of the most important era through which the National Government has ever passed. When the history of this period shall be impartially written, when war legislation, measures of reconstruction, protection of human rights, amendments to the constitution, maintenance of public credit, steps toward specie resumption, true theories of revenue may be reviewed, unsurrounded by prejudice and disconnected from partisanship, the speeches of Garfield will be estimated at their true value and will be found to comprise a vast magazine of fact and argument, of clear analysis and sound conclusion. Indeed, if no other authority were accessible, his speeches in the House of Representatives from December, 1863, to June, 1880, would give a well-connected history and complete defense of the important legislation of the seventeen eventful years that constitute his parliamentary life. Far beyond that, his speeches would be found to forecast many great measures yet to be completed—measures which he knew were beyond the public opinion of the hour, but which he confidently believed would secure popular approval within the period of his own lifetime and by the aid of his own efforts."

¹ "Eulogy," p. 35.

In addition to being the best-prepared speaker in the House, Garfield was also, in the opinion of his contemporaries, one of the first orators in the country. "Always strong," said McKinley,¹ "he was strongest on his feet, addressing the House, or, from the rostrum, the assembled people. Who of us, having heard him here or elsewhere, speaking upon a question of great national concern, can forget the might and majesty, the force and directness, the grace and beauty of his utterances?" "Many of his speeches," said Sherman,² "may be regarded as models of effective eloquence. They presented frankly the arguments on the topic under debate but were always enriched by apt metaphor, by illustrations drawn from other topics, by classical quotations. Even his impromptu speeches display the rich storehouse of learning from which he drew his inspiration. . . . He was always a ready speaker; ready promptly to reply to the argument of an adversary, without waiting to cull his phrases, or arrange his order of battle."

One of the best descriptions of Garfield's oratorical power was given by General J. W. Keifer, in his address of 1885 before the Society of the Army of the Cumberland.³ "As a public debater," he said, "Garfield excelled. It was his singular good fortune to think and come up to his supremest intellectual strength on his feet, under the excitement of public speech, rather than with his pen when in his seat. . . . Garfield was by nature left-handed and sometimes, when he rose to speak, he at first seemed awkward. This all disappeared as his genius flashed out in his fervid, masterly treatment of his subject. He then appeared an oratorical giant—a superb human machine in action, delightful to behold. His gestures were mostly with his open uplifted left hand and made emphatic by striking it down, sometimes clenched, into his open upturned right hand. He had a magnificent voice, resonant, well modulated, full, under complete control; capa-

¹ Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 104, 49 Cong., 1 sess., p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ Memorial Address, in *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1885, p. 129.

ble on occasions of great vehemence yet always pleasant to the ear."

"He approached his audiences," said Smalley,¹ "neither in a way of mock deference nor of superiority, but as if he were one of them, come to talk with them on terms of intellectual equality, and desirous of convincing their minds only by a perfectly fair presentation of facts and arguments. He had a strong, far-reaching voice, pitched in the middle key, a dignified, manly presence and an abundance of the quality which, for want of a better term, we call personal magnetism. His manner in his speeches was first engaging by reason of its frankness and moderation and afterwards impressive by its earnestness and vigor. At the climax of a speech he gathered up all the forces of statement and logic he had been marshalling and hurled them upon his listeners with tremendous force. His eyes dilated, his form seemed to expand, his voice took on a sort of explosive quality, his language gained the height of simple and massive eloquence, and his gestures became so energetic and forcible that he seemed at times, to be beating down opposition with sledge-hammer blows, throwing his arguments forward like solid shot from a cannon."

Garfield's oratorical style attained, in the last dozen years of his Congressional service, a dignity and restraint and a simplicity of structure and diction that marked maturity. The promptness with which the transition from his earlier "elegant" and decorated style began after he had felt the discipline of Congressional methods has been noted in earlier chapters.² A letter of 1865 to Hinsdale shows how consciously he made the change. "I am glad," he wrote (July 12, 1865), "that you are on the track of condensed, terse expression. I have been seeking for that more than for elegance. The power of making a clear, compendious statement of a case is a most valuable one. Lincoln was sometimes a model in that direction. See particularly his letter to Greeley

¹ E. V. Smalley, "Characteristics of Garfield," in *Century Magazine*, XXIII, p. 172.

² Chap. XII, p. 410.

on the slavery policy. But I think there is a great question lying behind style and which controls it. It is the power to think definitely and get a strong vivid picture before the mind of what one thinks, to analyze it so far as to remove all extraneous and unnecessary materials and then plainly express the very essence of the thought. This will of itself give the basis of a good style."

A few years sufficed to rid him permanently of the early sermonizing style of speaking, so much so that there was less imagery, less direct appeal to the emotions in his Decoration Day address of 1868 than in many a letter from Williamstown dealing with nothing more tragic than a sunset or a mountain view. In his journal for October 24, 1875, he reflected, after listening to a florid preacher: "I am beginning to realize the fact that I am getting beyond the region of youth and what I used to regard as eloquence is now intolerable mannerism to me. How vague and meaningless much of it now seems to me." The man who once loved to soar "in the blue cerulean" now aimed at a studied moderation in words and thought until in his last Congresses he had attained unsurpassed conciseness. Some of his five-minute speeches contained as much thought and argument as a hour of his earlier orations. "He often," said Sherman, "expressed in a single sharp sentence or phrase the whole argument that silenced his opponent."¹ Examples of this power of phrase have been given in the preceding chapters.

Over the revision of his speeches in Congress he grew more and more fastidious. After the reply to Lamar he wrote to his wife (August 8, 1876): "You know how slow and painful a process my work of revising a speech always is. This time it has been an unusually severe tug. I spent part of Sunday, a large share of yesterday and until two hours past midnight in verifying my facts, revising my notes and reading the proofs. . . . For a time I felt pleased with my speech, and some of its passages surprised me. They seemed not my own, but the words of some one who had seen my thoughts more clearly than I had myself." Yet even then he was not satisfied

¹ Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 104, 49 Cong., 1 sess., p. 6.

and made still further corrections to appear when the speech was published in pamphlet form. "I find myself very hard to satisfy," he observed in the journal, "in matters of literary taste and I presume such minute criticism while it makes the speech more correct, loses something of the freshness and vigor of the style." Keifer remarked of this habit, "Often his best friends appealed to him not to correct the notes of his speeches lest in his desire to conform his language to the highest standards of refined rhetoric and purest diction, he would leave them shorn of some portion of their power."

The striking thing about this almost extravagant zeal for rectitude, accuracy and intellectual soundness was that it came from no cold-bloodedness on Garfield's part. He was a man of warm emotions and quick impulses, and it was only his constant self-training that made him carry out his ideals. Now and then some crisis would carry him off his feet and lead him into extreme or emotional positions which he would almost always modify. One finds in his speeches occasional reckless use of arguments, evidently called forth by the occasion, and frequent examples of slips of memory, resulting from excitement and the desire to score a point. His antagonists occasionally accused him of exaggeration and misstatement, but to anyone reading the *Congressional Globe* and *Record* of the years from 1863 to 1880 the steady solidification and purification of Garfield's debating style and manner of thought is marked.

Literary composition seems to have grown more and more difficult for Garfield as he grew older. Some extracts from his journals will illustrate how far he had departed from the habits of college days, when he could toss off a thirty-page essay on Körner in a few hours. In the journal for June 21 (1873) he wrote: "I have become confirmed in my method of work. I must substantially finish as I go. Some men write with great rapidity and then rewrite with care, revising and changing. The first is the creative spirit, the second the critical. This method has some advantages, and perhaps among other things it gives more continuity to the composition. But I run the two processes together. I can not well

write a new sentence till I have satisfied myself with the last. This makes me a slow worker, for it requires many erasures and changes to keep the proper proportion of the article." The next day, commenting on his preparation of an address to be delivered at Hudson, he said, "I frequently come to a place where I work three or four hours before I can advance half a page. I sometimes think no one will ever appreciate the work put into a page."

Having agreed in 1875 to write an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* he developed a literary sensitiveness almost akin to stage fright. "This discussion of *Hard Money*," he wrote (November 20), "must be done carefully and with constant reference to historical and logical accuracy. Perhaps others can dash it off in short time, but I am making painfully slow progress with it. I find myself a little fearful of the grade of literary work with which my article will be compared when it appears in the *Atlantic* and so I feel myself shackled. It is one of the results of my lack of self-esteem." "Nov. 25. I am beginning to be distressed about the proportions. . . . I fear I am giving too much time to the statement of the soft money doctrines. Unless I am careful my article will be a dwarf with a big head and short legs." "Dec. 1. Continued the work until midnight. I have never written any paper which has caused me so much labor . . . but such as it is it must go. I have a foolish timidity about appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* among the Cambridge critics, but I rely mainly on the substance rather than the style."

Now and then, on special occasions, he wrote out in advance some Congressional speech, as, for example, the elaborate effort of May 15, 1868, on the currency, but when he delivered it he made no attempt to reproduce the text. Ten years later we find him writing out a campaign speech (August 22, 1878)—"late in the P.M. commenced dictating the speech. It is surprising how difficult it is for me to begin a speech. If I get the first paragraph started to suit me I feel that a prime difficulty is got over. After much struggle and halting, made a fair start." When it was completed, the next day, his criticism was, "The speech lacks fire" and when he

delivered it, August 24, he said: "I spoke an hour and a quarter, following in the main, the line of my printed speech. The spoken speech was more effective than the written one."

During all his public life Garfield was constantly in demand as an orator for special occasions—patriotic, memorial, historical—and if he had not declined most of his invitations, he might have filled his time with appearances before civic and educational bodies, military reunions, Chambers of Commerce, learned societies, church gatherings and banquets innumerable. From the fate of being a professional orator, his strong sense of duty to his Congressional responsibilities saved him; but he managed to find time to deliver a notable series of public addresses, a few of which were preserved in his collected works. All are marked with his urbanity, his careful preparation, his sense of proportion and balanced organization and the orator's feeling for rhythm and climax. If none of them have achieved a traditional fame it is largely because of the lack of the quality of passion in them. For a man of Garfield's habits of composition and lifelong effort at self-discipline, it was inevitable that his prepared orations should be deficient in this respect. No composition laboriously hammered out line by line could display strong emotion, unless the author were sufficiently dramatic to recreate his feelings, as it were in cold blood, on the written page. This was certainly not the case with Garfield. Without much doubt his ablest and most powerful speeches were those made on his feet in the House, and reported by the stenographers to remain hidden in the *Globe*, except as dragged out after his death for reproduction in his works. There, standing side by side with the prepared addresses, their superior verve and emotional effect is manifest.

What Garfield really liked, after all, was the untrammelled *ex tempore* speech, either in the give and take debate in the House or on the stump. He really enjoyed stumping; for although he groaned more and more over his labors, he never shrank from performing his full party duty, and his intimate letters to his wife show that, while he was lamenting

his absence from the comforts of home, he was actually taking great satisfaction in watching the effect of his speeches, whether to his own familiar district audiences, to strange ones in Maine and New York or to Copperhead hearers in Ohio. In an interesting description of Garfield's campaign speech at Ithaca in 1878, Andrew D. White says:¹ "Of all the thousands of political speeches I have heard it was the most effective. It was eloquent, but it was more than that; it was honestly argumentative; there was no sophistry of any sort; every subject was taken up fairly and every point dealt with thoroughly. One could see the supports of the Greenback Party vanishing as he went on. His manner was the very opposite of Mr. Conkling's; it was kindly, hearty, as of neighbor with neighbor—indeed every person present, even if greenbacker or demagogue, must have said within himself, 'This man is a friend arguing with friends: He makes me his friend and now speaks to me as such.' Never was a speech more successful. It carried the entire audience and left in that region hardly a shred of the greenback theory. . . . I have often alluded to this result as an answer to those who say that speaking produces no real effect on the convictions of men regarding party matters. . . . The meeting ended, he asked me, 'How did you like my speech?' I answered, 'Garfield, I have known you too long and think too highly of you to flatter you; but I will simply say what I would say under oath: it was the best speech I ever heard.' This utterance of mine was deliberate, expressing my conviction and he was evidently pleased with it."

There can be little doubt that Garfield was positively stimulated on that occasion by the knowledge that he had Greenbackers in his audience. He wrote in his journal, on October 3 that same year, of a speech at Youngstown: "I was conscious of a hostile element in the crowd and made a special effort to capture their understanding. The antagonism helped me, and I think I made the most effective speech I have yet made in Ohio."

Garfield undoubtedly felt that this was his field, his one

¹ *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 187.

unquestioned gift, and if he had any real vanity in his make-up it was limited to his success in this. It is interesting to see how constantly and how ingenuously he reported to his wife or to other intimate friends his impressions of his success or the compliments he received. And it was in this field alone that he consciously matched himself against other men and that he almost invariably contrasted his success with theirs. After a speech at London, Ohio, in September, 1877, he wrote home (September 20): "At the risk of appearing egotistical I will tell you that Judge Smith, a leading citizen of London, told me, after the meeting was over, that the people there had heard Corwin and Chase and all the old leaders, but that they were unanimous in the opinion that mine was the best speech they had ever heard."

Nothing but a deep enjoyment of public speaking could have atoned for the extreme physical discomforts he had to endure in the process of party campaigning. A few quotations from letters to his wife will serve to illustrate. In 1864, for instance, he wrote home with grim humor: "Tell Harry and his mother that their father and husband with two shirts and no night-shirt, neither tooth brush nor carpet-sack, notes nor documents but with T's variegated bag and its totally depraved lock which guards from public inspection a very dirty shirt, and two collars, two bottles and one box of medicine . . . is tonight a shabby genteel vagabond." Thus equipped, he arrived at Millersburg and "held a reception in one of the bedrooms of the 'Eagle.' I managed to invent some sort of reply to the oft-repeated, 'I have read a great deal about Jeneral Garfield and watched his course for a long time.' After being looked at as though I were a hippopotamus I got away to dinner."

Turning to his later campaigns we find even greater discomforts recorded. At Kenton, September 15, 1877: "I spoke in the public square where a platform had been erected, facing the wind and near the roar of wagons in the street. Just across the street behind me three carpenters were furiously hammering on roof boards to protect a new building from a storm of rain and wind that seemed to threaten.

Under these charming circumstances I tried for an hour and a half to make 5000 people hear me, and though I succeeded it left me soaked with perspiration and choked with hoarseness."

His last campaign, that of 1879, was one of the very worst. Writing to his wife on September 19 he told how he went by train from Solon to Warren, changed and went thence to Salem and finally was driven eight miles to Goshen, where he addressed 2,000 people in a grove, then back to Salem and addressed the "largest meeting since the war." At ten he went by carriage and railroad to Carrollton, where he spoke an hour and a half, late in the night, to 2,500 people. Leaving Carrollton the next morning at seven he was driven twenty-eight miles in a carriage to Cadiz, where he spoke two hours to 3,000 people in the fair grounds, and "we then drove 16 miles, the last half of it in pitch dark, in a blinding rain to St. Clairsville." Next day, going by rail fifty miles to Quaker City, he spoke an hour and a half, thence went by train and carriage to Ætnaville and spoke again to not less than 5,000 people. The next morning he drove nine miles more to Mt. Pleasant, where he hoped to "get a little rest." But the next letter showed that he went sixty-six miles in wagons and thirty-five in cars in two days, to which thirty-six more miles in carriages were added on the following "and am still alive and feeling remarkably well."

In the midst of these prodigious efforts (September 16), he stopped at a small village to pass the night. "I supposed I would escape observation here, but about 75 people assembled and begged me to speak to them. The sight of a little school house, crowded full of eager people, who were surrounded by the worse type of copperheads, overcame me, and I spoke three quarters of an hour—much I know to your disapproval, but really I could not help it." He went on to say that his cold was better and he was feeling stronger. "The fact is," he concluded, "out of door speaking is a great tonic; and if not overdone is good for the health."

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, Garfield seems to have felt satisfied with whatever speech he delivered. The

hundredth time he was profoundly dissatisfied. "I shall never fathom this mystery of speech-making," he wrote to his wife (September 15). "I have just talked nearly two hours in a fine opera house, crowded with intelligent listeners and every minute of the time felt certain that I was making a poor speech. It was agony to feel that I was making a failure and yet I felt it all the while. It adds to the mystery to say that many people since the meeting speak in high terms of it. But they can't fool me. I know it was a miserable speech, and the most miserable part of it is that I don't know why."

When, in the Maine campaign of 1879, Garfield arrived at Portland with a heavy cold, he reported, half-humorously and wholly ruefully, his experiences. "I went to Biddeford, 15 miles away, with head and throat so full of ache and roughness I could hardly sit up, and spoke an hour to an immense audience. It was the most dismal failure I ever made, and what was worse I did not care. I came back to Portland, wrote in my diary the confession of failure and went to bed. . . . I have passed the day in contemplating a more conspicuous failure tonight in this city. After all my experience and success to have my ambition and pride and effectiveness all swept away together by the mere stoppage of my nose. . . . By the way I ought to have added as a new and striking illustration of the untruthfulness of newspapers, that the Republican paper here reported that my speech was 'very able and eloquent' but no lying paper can change the fact."

But intellectual ability and oratorical power constitute only a part of the equipment of every real Congressional leader. Fully as important, often more important, is the effect produced by the personal bearing of the man, his attitude toward his colleagues, toward his opponents, toward his supporters, and by the spirit he showed in his conduct of legislation. In Garfield's case the reader of the foregoing chapters will not need to be told that one of his most conspicuous features was the kindness and generosity which he unfailingly displayed toward his fellow Republicans and the attitude of sportsmanship which he maintained toward

his Democratic antagonists. Throughout his Congressional career Garfield acted on the basis of a courteous equality. He would stoop to no man, but he desired no man to stoop to him. "He was always just to an adversary," said McKinley,¹ "an open and manly opponent, and free from invective." "He was a pre-eminently fair and candid man in debate," said Blaine,² "took no petty advantage, stooped to no unworthy methods, avoided personal allusions, rarely appealed to prejudice, did not seek to inflame passion."

Toward his colleagues he showed an intellectual courtesy rare in anyone, but especially remarkable in a Congressman. To begin with, he aimed always to meet his opponent on a perfectly fair basis. "He had a quicker eye," said Blaine, "for the strong point of his adversary than for his weak point and on his own side he so marshalled his weighty arguments as to make his hearers forget any possible lack in the complete strength of his position. He had a habit of stating his opponent's side with such amplitude of fairness and such liberality of concession that his followers often complained that he was giving his case away. But never in his prolonged participation in the proceedings of the House did he give his case away, or fail, in the judgment of competent and impartial listeners, to gain the mastery."

A writer in *Harper's Weekly*, describing him in the winter of 1876, said: "He impresses his audience with the feeling that he wishes to gain their good-will. He begins with the careful courtesy of saying all he can on the side of those who differ from him, and then hurls himself into his own side of the argument, sure of a kind hearing, even from his opponents."

Still more noteworthy, he was ready to admit himself wrong, if corrected. "He had a great deference," said Hoar,³ "for other men's opinions. When, after he had expressed his opinion, some strong and positive man came to him with a confident utterance of a different opinion, unless Garfield

¹ Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 6, 49 Cong., 1 sess., p. 29.

² "Eulogy," p. 30.

³ *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 399.

had gone to the bottom of the subject himself, he was very likely to defer, to hesitate, to think himself mistaken." Scores of examples of this intellectual courtesy might be given from the *Congressional Record* where, on small points, Garfield accepted correction from other members who claimed to be better informed. This was notably true on bills lying outside Garfield's own field, and not infrequently occurred in connection with the details of appropriation bills. Furthermore, he was prepared to learn from anybody, even from men whose personalities displeased him and whose views were utterly abhorrent—such men as Kelley or even Butler—if they could really furnish pertinent facts.

It is to be observed, however, that the cases where he accepted correction were nearly all connected with the minor details of bills, for while Garfield's intellectual candor was such that he was prepared to change his position on any policy if convincing new evidence or new arguments could be brought forward, so thorough was his customary preparation that this practically never happened on important matters. His shift regarding ship subsidies in 1872 and his change from gold monometallism to international bimetalism in 1877 were almost the only conspicuous instances of changed opinions on questions of national policy, and these were due to his own studies and reflections, not to external pressure or correction.

As to his position on the problems of the tariff and the currency Garfield took pride in his unchanging consistency. It is undoubtedly true that there was a change in his emphasis on the tariff from 1866, when he avowed himself a believer in "that free trade which can be reached only through protection," to 1878 and 1880, when he ceased to use that formula; but a careful reading of his speeches and a study of his amendments and votes will show that he adhered throughout to the same line of economic thought, and in 1866 as in 1880 demanded sufficient protection only to balance the difference in cost of production. Speaking of this middle position, equally removed from free trade and from Pennsylvania protectionism, he said, in 1880, "I esteem

it one of the greatest of my achievements in statesmanship to have held that equipoise."¹

Hoar's summary is a just and fair one. "He hesitated long as to the doctrine of protection and undoubtedly made some inconsistent utterances before he took the ground which he held at last. But he studied the financial question, especially the great subjects of currency and the standard of value, to the very bottom. He stood like a rock when Ohio and the whole West seemed going against him and when the statesmanship even of John Sherman was of the willow and not of the oak. . . . There has been hardly any single service to this country in recent times greater than that rendered by him when he stood against the fiat money movement in Ohio."²

What Hoar undoubtedly had in mind in his allusion to Sherman was a criticism which the latter passed upon Garfield in his *Recollections*.³ "I know Garfield well," he wrote. "From his early advent in 1861 in the legislature of Ohio when I was a candidate for the Senate, to the date of his death I had every opportunity to study his character. . . . His will power was not equal to his personal magnetism. He easily changed his mind and honestly veered from one impulse to another. This, I think, will be admitted by his warmest friends." In similar terms Boutwell⁴ spoke of "his sudden and unreasoning submission to an expression of public opinion without waiting for evidence of the nature and value of that opinion," and Hayes, summing up in his journal, wrote:⁵ "He was not firm, not a moral force. . . . His vacillations when leading the House place him in another list from Lincoln, Clay, Sumner and all the other heroes of our civil history."

Of these judgments that of Hayes may be absolutely discarded, since any "vacillations" that Garfield showed when

¹ *North American Review*, Vol. CLXIV, p. 261, May, 1887.

² *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 400.

³ *John Sherman's Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 807.

⁴ G. S. Boutwell, *Reminiscences*, Vol. II, p. 274.

⁵ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 364.

leading the House—*i.e.*, from 1876 to 1880—were entirely due to his steady policy of accommodating his actions to Hayes's own leadership. Any criticism passed by Hayes upon Garfield's leadership simply operates as a criticism upon Hayes himself, as the preceding chapter amply illustrates. As to Sherman and Boutwell, it is probable that what they refer to was Garfield's willingness to change a provisional opinion upon the discovery of further contrary evidence, and his equal readiness to change his parliamentary tactics if desirable. There can be no doubt that to many persons such an attitude of mind as Garfield's suggests an infirmity of will. A fairly stubborn obstinacy in regard to all contentious points coupled with a prompt announcement and unyielding advocacy of some definite position seems to commend itself to the average legislator. It suggests solidity and determination.

An unfriendly criticism by a Washington newspaper correspondent shows how this trait in Garfield appeared to an admirer of Blaine. "He had uncommon intellectual powers but he was lacking in moral courage. His own conviction of right was never strong enough to sustain him. He never knew how to act without consultation with others in whom he had confidence. Even in his early public career he was known as a man not quite certain as to his course on many subjects. Before publicly announcing himself upon a question he was only too apt to be influenced by the person last with him."¹

In Garfield's case, his whole career shows the superficiality of such a criticism. Hoar dealt with it very fairly when he said:² "It is the fashion, even among his friends, to speak of him as a person timid, if not time-serving, and as easily swayed and moulded by a strong will. . . . I feel very sure that this is a great mistake. Garfield's hesitation, want of certainty, liability to change his position suddenly were in my opinion the result of intellectual hesitation and of a habit of going down to the roots of his mind, nobody and no

¹ T. C. Crawford, *Life and Distinguished Services of James G. Blaine*, p. 253.

² *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 398.

consideration of personal interest or advantage would stir him an inch." And again, "He was remarkably independent in forming his judgments and inflexible in adhering to them on all great and essential questions." There can be no doubt that in this respect Garfield's habits of thought and action led men of a different type of mind to draw widely erroneous conclusions.

Beneath all of Garfield's intellectual courtesy and parliamentary urbanity lay a deeply rooted party loyalty. As every quotation from letters or journal has shown, he had a fundamental distrust of the Democrats, based on his war-time experiences and deepened by his conviction of their financial heresy. Ready and glad to coöperate with them on nonpartisan matters, he displayed himself on all questions involving party control a reliable "eight to seven man," somewhat to the regret of his friend Hinsdale, who wrote in 1879 a letter with the following vein of criticism (April 27): "I am sure you are influenced far beyond what you are aware of by the traditions of the party and by partisan bias. I am sure too that your work as a 'stumper' is telling on your habits of discussion and upon the whole tone of your mind in a way of which you are not aware. . . . Nothing has given you so much strength with men of reason as your firmness, candor and calmness, and I confess that it hurts me to read a speech of yours that might just as well have borne the name of Blaine."

This was not at all relished by Garfield, and he defended himself vigorously both on the specific point and also on the general charge (May 20, 1879): "I should be grieved indeed, if I felt that political speaking was weakening my love of study and reflection in other directions. I thank you for the suggestion and shall keep watch of myself . . . but it occurs to me that I have made more speeches of the kind you approve within the last six months than of the kind you disapprove." On Hinsdale's criticism of his language as exaggerated, he said: "I do not know that I exhibited any more of the *gaudium certaminis* than a man usually does who is in earnest. . . . Let me say, in regard to your own mind, that

I think your quiet life, in a peaceful and law-abiding community and your just dislike of the men who are willing to keep up sectional strife have led you to underestimate the prevalence of the wicked spirit of the Democratic party, especially the southern wing of it. Their perfidious treatment of the President, their still worse treatment of the negroes, their persistent efforts to praise the 'Lost Cause' and prophesy its ultimate success, their everyday talk since they obtained control of both Houses are forced upon our attention here constantly and you mistake our resistance to them for an attempt on our part to re-awaken dead issues. I think you are unconsciously being too much influenced by the *Nation*. . . . Godkin can teach us both on many European questions, but I have for a long time felt that Godkin was becoming cynical, partisan and unjust in his treatment of American affairs."

One who reads Garfield's speeches and letters and notes the trend of his thought in these years cannot help feeling that Hinsdale was partly right—that Garfield had become more partisan both in action and in thought. The explanation is obvious. From 1871 to 1875 he had been one of the principal Republican chairmen and his conduct of the appropriation bills had been constantly under fire from Democratic critics. Even though he himself tried to avoid partisan considerations and to base his action on abstract principles of sound finance, circumstances did not always permit him to do so. This tended to force him more into party thinking. Since 1875 he had been in opposition to the Democratic majority, the chosen floor leader of the Republicans, and, in addition, had been to a large measure the personal representative of the President during the severe contest with the Democrats. No man could have gone through such an experience without having all his party feelings deepened and strengthened.

Yet Hinsdale's criticism went too far when it sought to find partisan motives in all Garfield's acts. To the end he showed himself glad to drop party questions, even in the midst of bitter contests, in favor of some measure, like the

Mississippi levees, which he considered worth while. He never reached the point where party considerations were the first to occur to his mind; and merely beating the Democrats gave him no lasting satisfaction unless he felt they had taken a wrong position and deserved a beating.

It is obvious, of course, that Garfield, for all his debating skill and personal popularity, would never have been chosen to lead the Republican party in the House unless he had been a sound partisan. Such is the natural outcome of a system of party government. Yet later students of the period have been influenced perhaps overmuch, as Hinsdale was, by the running comments of Godkin of the *Nation*, who, advocating ideal reasonableness on every issue, found nothing admirable or even defensible in any partisanship, under any circumstances. The *Nation* said of Garfield, for instance (June 10, 1880): "That he is by no means an ideal politician we do not deny. He is too keenly alive to the prejudices of his district, and was too ready in 1876 to play the part of a 'Visiting Statesman' to be entitled to a place among public men of the first rank." In other words, the *Nation* selected the two features of Garfield's career which gave him his long tenure and his party prominence as grounds for condemnation. The comment shows the real shallowness of Godkin's grasp on the forces underlying American political life.

Nevertheless, Godkin ranked Garfield apart from the ordinary war-horse Republican politician. In a number of cases, already quoted, the *Nation* paid compliments to Garfield's efforts for sound money and for civil service reform, and it gave him credit for intellectual honesty. Commenting, for instance, on his election to the Senate, the *Nation* said, January 8, 1880, "Mr. Garfield is one of the few Republican statesmen of the day who is a real orator and whose speeches one cannot easily sketch before he delivers them—that is, he is not a party hack and has personal opinions and utters them." This from Godkin, for a Republican, was high praise.

Garfield's type of public service is the kind that always fares ill at the hands of those who write history or biography

from a personal point of view, for to such the reformer or single-minded advocate of some cause is the only really interesting or admirable figure. A man who led his party on all partisan issues and who, on all nonpartisan matters, tried merely to find out the facts and draw conclusions as to what was the reasonable thing to do under the circumstances, could win scant approval from idealists. Now it is an undoubted fact that Garfield supported every reforming bill introduced into the House, and made many speeches in favor of educational, administrative and economic changes, but he did not do it as a reformer. To him these things were incidental, the running of the government the main thing; whereas to the Congressional reformer—the man of the Sumner type—the reform was the main thing, the running of the government the side issue.

What exasperated the *Nation* was Garfield's conviction that it was his duty to get the appropriation bills through, even if saddled with obnoxious amendments and riders. What Godkin wanted was for Garfield to try to cut off all the appropriations for the federal government rather than permit a single bad amendment to go through. On March 19, 1874, he fulminated at him as follows: "Finally we would say to General Garfield and other well-meaning gentlemen whose sincerity we do not question, that it is about time that the great work of 'saving appropriation bills' by winking at 'Salary Grabs' and 'Sanborn Contracts' should cease. The country at last perceives—and it has paid well for the knowledge—that appropriations and general legislation are distinct and incongruous things and that it is necessary to hold Congress to a strict accountability for each. Hereafter let us hope there will be no more excuses of voting for the one 'to save the other' and that, if there be, they will be deemed an aggravation of the offence."

To Hinsdale, who had asked his opinion on this attack, Garfield replied calmly (March 28): "Godkin is right in the general subject of legislating on appropriation bills; but is wrong in this. He does not seem to appreciate the fact that the two houses cannot agree upon any bill where there

are differences of opinion without compromise. In fact almost every act is an act of compromise and a compromise *per se* is not always a wrong, indeed not generally wrong."

History interpreted from the standpoint of the reformer ignores, to a large degree, the necessity for the steady performance of current public duties. The single-minded advocate, the immovable believer in some cause, may be more picturesque, may suggest more the champion battling for the right; but a Congress entirely composed of such types would probably be unable to pass a single bill. The careful following through of a session of any Congress between 1863 and 1880 will be sufficient to reveal to the student that nine-tenths of the really efficient work is done by men more or less of the Garfield type. There must be compromise, there must be adjustment, there must be consideration of all the elements involved, to secure the proper performance of the functions of legislation for which Congress was created. And the fact that Garfield, while intent always on bringing things to pass, was frequently ready to neglect his own consistency and to make compromises, and even on further reflection to reverse his position, was what gave him his strength in the House. He was there to help in passing bills and resolutions—the best ones which his powers of thought and study could help to frame—and not to make a record for himself, nor to advertise any single cause.

The essential difference between the political ideals of a typical reformer and such a man as Garfield is admirably illustrated in the latter's attitude toward the spoils system. Not only his letters, from which quotations have been freely made, but his public speeches in Congress, show how clearly he saw the evils of the practice and how irksome he found its burdens. In the Congresses of 1870-1873 he fought manfully for Civil Service Reform, and in his *Atlantic Monthly* article on "Congress" (July, 1877) he published what is almost a classic description of the operations of the spoils system and the need for reform. Yet at the same time, Garfield, finding himself living and acting among people who took it for granted, accepted it as part of his official duties and exer-

cised the same control over offices that all Congressmen did, the only difference being that whereas practically all Garfield's colleagues used their influence for their own political benefit, to reward adherents and punish enemies, Garfield tried to exercise his powers for the benefit of the communities.

On Garfield's relation to his district a volume might be written, for in his letter books and collections of letters received the whole story is contained. Out of this voluminous correspondence there naturally grew an acquaintance with political leaders all over the district, the more especially since Garfield, from the start, sought to act in all such matters with the advice of the "leading men" in the different counties. There were also the local newspapers to be considered, their editors consulted and their columns used in times of political controversy.

Garfield's letters to these men and his letters from them are an interesting and a creditable series, especially in view of the fact that they were exchanged at a time when the spoils system flourished at its rankest throughout the federal and state governments. It may be said, baldly, that through these men he administered the spoils of the nineteenth district; but while he accepted the principle and performed the duties laid upon him by custom, he adopted two devices that tended to relieve him of trouble. In the matter of nominations for West Point and Annapolis he followed the custom, begun by his predecessor, of having a public examination of candidates and nominating the boy whom the examiners presented. This system he described in a speech in Congress which has been already quoted. It seemed to him a perfectly satisfactory sort of examination system.

A different method was adopted by him in regard to post offices, for whenever a change was demanded, or whenever a vacancy was to be filled, he insisted upon discovering by petitions or even by a sort of primary election, precisely whom the local Republicans preferred to have for the incumbent. This by no means secured plain sailing, for something like a deadlock resulted at times, owing to the near equality

of the two sides and the violent charges which the respective factions brought against the other's candidate. Here is a sample letter from Garfield explaining his methods to a man who felt aggrieved (J. W. Leyde, January 11, 1869): "More than a week ago I received a letter signed by the officers of the meeting stating the number of votes cast for the different candidates, and showing a very large majority in favor of Mr. Edwards. I received also several letters informing me that this action was a fair expression of the sentiments of the Republicans of Hubbard. With these lights before me, I felt instructed to forward the result of the meeting to the Postmaster General and recommend his acting in accordance with their request. My action in this case has been in accordance with the practice which I have uniformly followed since I have been a member of Congress, namely always to consult the wishes of the people in regard to their postmaster. I have no personal acquaintance with Mr. Edwards and of course have no personal preference to gratify."

The above could be duplicated scores of times. It is noteworthy that Garfield in such cases—and they covered nearly all the "spoils" in his district—made no effort whatever to build up a personal following, but expressly disclaimed either praise or blame, thanks or the reverse. He wrote to a constituent (S. Hayward, May 28, 1872): "I do not see on what ground of public policy or justice I have any right to dictate who shall be P.M. at Conneaut or any other place than my own, and even there no more than any other citizen has. It is for that reason that I have made it my invariable rule since I have been in Congress to throw the responsibility of making the changes upon the people themselves."

Nevertheless, it is to be observed that Garfield at no time showed any willingness to have a Democrat in office in his district. Up to 1869 he could not prevent a few getting in, through the Johnson administration, but after Grant's accession he got rid of them as rapidly as possible. Other federal positions, collectorships, internal revenue offices and the like, he seems to have given to any of these political friends who seemed desirous or to the man best recommended

by local sentiment in any community. Now and then he was able to get a position for some friend in a Washington department or even in the territories. He gave such backing as he had in favor of several who had aspirations toward the diplomatic service, but here the influence of a member of the House does not carry very far and it does not appear that he was very successful with this kind of patronage.

On the whole, the impression produced is that Garfield tried to use the spoils system so as to satisfy communities and so as to get reliable and efficient men. In other words, he tried to make the spoils system work well. If he, as Congressman, was compelled to assume charge of distributing offices, then he would do it as well as he could. But he never enjoyed the management of offices nor looked on it in any other light than as an intolerable burden. Quotations to that effect have been given already. On January 9, 1869, he remarked to his friend Converse, "Of all the difficulties I have ever encountered in the discharge of my official duties since I have been in Washington, nothing has been more trying than Post Office fights when once the blood is up."

In judging his later attitude toward Civil Service Reform this distinction is to be noted as explaining some of the features of his attitude which reformers found unsatisfactory. To begin with, his experience in regard to appointments in his district was such as to render him disinclined to see the necessity for any change. He never tried to build up a personal machine; he never tried to have postmasters and collectors turned out of office; he always sought to secure advice and recommendations from prominent men whenever an appointment was to be suggested. To him appointments to office in the district were laborious at times, but never very burdensome. As long as a postmaster gave good satisfaction he was content to let him remain indefinitely. As far as the Washington departments were concerned, he found his duties of recommending appointments or soliciting offices both laborious and distasteful. He was perfectly ready to name for a place a good man from among his constituents, but he disliked the effort to force an impecunious man or

woman as clerk upon a surly bureau chief or secretary. There seemed to be no way of avoiding the task, however, and a reading of Garfield's journal shows how great a burden this duty became.

A few items, selected almost at random, will serve to illustrate the sort of solicitation that he felt compelled to undertake. When it was a question of applying for an office in one of the departments, or when some constituent appealed to him to secure reversal of a federal ruling, or to extricate a son from the army who had enlisted against his parents' will, or to induce the Bureau of Pensions to look favorably upon a dubious application, there was nothing to do but to "go to the Department." "Dec. 6, 1873. Went to several of the Departments. Got an appointment for the widow of Mr. Robinson, late a leader of the Disciples Church of this place." "Feb. 2 '75 Went to the Treasury with the son of Mr. Parks of Warren to secure him a place in the Marine Hospital Service. I help this man with reluctance, for I think he was opposed to me last year. I ought perhaps to tell him so but I concluded to let it pass and help his boy, as the father has not helped me." "Oct. 21 1875 Went to the Interior Department to secure the restoration of Warren Young to his clerkship in the pension office." Failing in that he tried other places. "Dec. 28 Went to the Post Office Department and spent two or three hours in trying to secure a clerkship for Warren Young and a place for Mrs. Lacy, a lady in whom C. has taken so much interest." On January 15, 1876, he was still working. "Spent several hours at the Departments in securing a place for Warren Young." On February 5 he reported, "Went to the Treasury and War Departments to secure Warren Young a clerkship." A month later the goal was still unattained. "Feb. 2 Called at the Treasury to remove a trouble in the way of Warren Young's appointment." On May 1, 1876, he was still trying to find a place for Mrs. Lacy. Examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

Under this burden Garfield grew increasingly discontented. "Dec. 14, 1872 Spent four hours among the depart-

ments on other people's business. I do not know that I have ever been more weary of this sort of vicarious suffering than I am tonight. The great crowd of people that come upon me for one thing or another draw heavily upon my vital forces and go far toward exhausting the large measure of strength which I possess." Similar quotations could be multiplied to the end of his Congressional days. Yet it is significant that no amount of such annoyance was sufficient to drive Garfield into making any effort to do away with the system. All that can be said is that he simply lacked the reformer's instinct. His tendency always was to work as well as he could under conditions as he found them.

If the "Independent" reformers of the *Nation* type found Garfield disappointing, the more radical ones found his coolness and moderation in judgment actually maddening. Foremost among those who alternately praised and abused him were the advocates of woman suffrage, whose cause attained a sudden flurry of conspicuousness in 1868-1869 in view of the discussion then going on over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. As usual Garfield saw both sides of the question. Writing to Whitelaw Reid (December 9, 1868) he said he thought Greeley "fully exposed the absurdity of the claim set up by Mrs. Stanton and her followers—that woman should have all the rights of man and still enjoy all the exceptions which a chivalric regard for her physical inferiority has so long conceded to her. I can hardly tell you how repulsive to my feelings are the leading features of the Woman's Rights movement; but there are two pages and a half of the chapter on Suffrage in John Stuart Mill's book on Representative Government which stagger me more than anything else I have read."

In the summer of 1869 Garfield was asked by Lucy Stone to join in calling a meeting for the purpose of demanding woman suffrage as well as negro suffrage. His reply showed his uncertainty of mind and his unwillingness to commit himself. "While I recognize the justice and wisdom of many of the claims put forward by the Association which you represent, I have not yet so fully canvassed the merits of the claim

for Suffrage for Women as to make it right for me to sign the call for the meeting which you propose. Whatever may be the merits of the question, I should be sorry to see the 15th Amendment imperilled by pressing a kindred issue, on which there is much less unanimity in the public mind. Holding myself ready to follow wherever the logic of liberty and wisdom shall lead, I am etc." Two years later he had definitely made up his mind against the movement. (Stone, November 9, 1871.) He declined to address a woman suffrage meeting on the ground that "my reflections . . . have led me to believe that the suffrage is not the appropriate remedy for the many evils of which Woman so justly complains. Had I no other reason . . . the recent phases of opinion and action which the woman movement has assumed would convince me." For this he was attacked in the *Woman's Journal* as a deserter, but he remained personally on excellent terms with the leading advocates of the reform, notably Susan B. Anthony.

As time went on, his aversion to the radicalism of the advocates of women's rights grew steadily stronger and deeper. Writing to Mrs. S. M. Carroll of Pennsylvania he said in part (January 26, 1872): "On the question of the abstract right of women to the ballot I am not prepared to say that it cannot be strongly defended. . . . But on another branch of the subject my convictions are clear. If it were clear to my mind that suffrage would aid in the elevation of woman more than it is [*sic*] injurious, I should not hesitate to give it my hearty support. [But] I believe the value of suffrage in this respect is greatly overestimated and considering the phases that have recently been developed among a large portion of the leading advocates of Woman Suffrage, I fear that the movement has more evil in itself than good. I cannot contemplate without horror that feature of the movement that tends to strike down the sanctity of marriage and break up the foundations of the family on which the purity, and peace and happiness of society depend." With this decision he seems to have rested content during the remainder of his life.

Toward the movement for prohibition of the sale of liquors, Garfield held a doubtful attitude. Writing to a questioner, he said (October 21, 1873), "In regard to the Prohibition movement, I fully agree with the aims and purposes of that party in so far as they can be accomplished by legislation; but I don't believe the moral sense of the State is even yet brought up to the level of the Adair law which I fear the Democrats will repeal this winter." The next year he reiterated this opinion, saying (April 16, 1874): "The temperance movement in Ohio illustrates the truth of what I said on the stump in last fall's campaign, that the Prohibition Party were working along the wrong line—that what was needed was not more law in the state of Ohio, but the bringing of public sentiment up to the level of the laws we have. . . . Prohibitionists . . . desire to form a political party rather than to achieve results."

In the simultaneous Granger movement he took some interest when it seemed as though it might affect the farmers of the nineteenth district, but his judgment on its aims and methods was cool and charitable (September 19, 1873). "The farmers' movement is growing to be a formidable one, but like most organizations impelled by the wrath of its founders, the grangers, as it was in some portions of the country, seem to have no well-founded knowledge of the real evils of which they complain. They are assailing the railroads when they should assail the legislation out of which railroads have become what they are."

It was the very fact that Garfield was not susceptible to "movements" and "reforms," but retained always an attitude of party loyalty on essentials, coupled with intellectual honesty and practicable reasonableness on all pending questions, that gave him his hold over the House. Yet it is precisely in this field that criticism was aimed against him as being insufficiently partisan. Blaine very frankly pointed out that as a fighting leader he fell short. After the passages already quoted on Garfield's abilities he went on: "These characteristics, which marked Garfield as a great debater, did not, however, make him a great parliamentary leader. . . . The

parliamentary leader who has a body of followers that will do and dare and die for the cause, is one who believes his party always right, but, right or wrong is for his party. . . . He must know not merely how to strike, but where and when to strike. . . . He conquers often both against the right and the heavy battalions. . . . For an achievement of that kind Garfield was disqualified, disqualified by the texture of his heart, by his conscience, and by every instinct and aspiration of his nature." More specifically, Blaine enumerated the powers possessed by the greatest leaders as including "the power to command . . . the art of controlling and consolidating reluctant and refractory followers . . . the skill to overcome all forms of opposition."

An editorial in the *New York Times* (December 11, 1880) made the same point when discussing Garfield's leadership: "He had many qualities which fitted him for the work which fell into his hands and yet he was the foremost Republican member rather than the acknowledged leader. . . . Mr. Garfield was, if we may say so, while a good strategist, a very indifferent tactician. He was entirely capable of shaping the general policy of his party, of defining the ends which it should pursue, of stating with vigor and effect the principles which should guide it. But in the daily manœuvres of his party to meet the shifting requirements of a parliamentary struggle, he was not distinguished. He lacked the quickness of perception, the promptness of decision, the fertility of resource which are so valuable in wresting advantages from the majority or in opposing legitimate obstacles to their advance." Murat Halsted, commenting in the *Cincinnati Commercial* (January 7, 1880) on Garfield's election to the Senate, put it emphatically, saying: "Few if any senators exceed him in intellectual capacity or in command of valuable information, but in comparison with Blaine and Conkling and others who may be named, he lacks power, self-assertion, executive aptitude. It does not seem to us that he possesses the edge and point of character essential to large leadership."

This amounts to saying that only a fighting leader can be

considered of the first rank. Such a judgment reflects the nature of the man who makes it,—of Blaine, whom Garfield called the “most complete parliamentary gladiator”; of Halsted, famous for his vitriolic pen; of Jones of the *Times*. Yet there is no doubt that among Garfield’s Congressional contemporaries the tendency was strong to accept Blaine’s estimate, and to feel that only the leader who visibly displayed a dominating will and was ready to ride down an opponent or thrust aside a friend to secure victory was a figure of the first rank. If a dash of personal intimidation and terrorism were added, as in the case of Stevens, Butler or Blaine himself, the impression was deepened.

Unquestionably, Garfield was not of that type. He lacked, as he said himself, the *gaudium certaminis*, and a contest, as such, possessed slight attractions. He was ready to win by partisan means if necessary, but all his preferences lay in the direction of a victory through reason and the careful framing of measures. As for personal pugnacity, it played practically no part in his Congressional dealings. Garfield had a temper, but by long habit it was under firm control and was rarely shaken, even under extreme provocation. A quarrel he felt to be a waste of time, and unworthy of a grown man. Now and then, not infrequently, he was compelled to engage in personal debates, especially after he had become the official leader of the Republicans and had a position to maintain, but he found no zest in it.

In his journal for 1879 he noticed this trait. “Feb. 25 Mr. Banning read a prepared speech attacking me. . . . I replied to him and I think did so effectively. It is my impression that I made a mistake in not noticing his personal insinuations against me. I think there is danger that I am getting too spiritless in regard to personalities but the fact is, I thoroughly despise all mere personal debates. I never feel that to slap a man in the face is any real gain to the truth.” A reading of the *Congressional Globe* will reveal a good many cases where Garfield engaged in running debate with attempts at repartee, but in this he was no match for many a congressman whose ability to construct a valid argu-

ment was far below his own. When fairly driven to it on the stump he was capable of hard hitting, as in the Painesville encounter with Tuttle in 1874, but that was wholly exceptional in his career. Under all circumstances he tended to turn away from mere wrangling and to place debate upon the actual merits of the matter under discussion. For the defense of himself or his party he relied upon the presentation of facts and arguments, not epithets.

It is to be emphasized that this lack of personal pugnacity arose from no lack of courage, for if there was any single quality, aside from his intellectual breadth, in which Garfield excelled, it was in that. From the moment he entered the House he was ready to confront anybody, no matter who, in debate or in parliamentary manœuvring. He stood up without hesitation against the worst Congressional bullies—Stevens, Butler, Logan—or the most dominating leaders, such as Schenck or Blaine, returning to the attack again and again. He was capable of the most stubborn, prolonged contests in behalf of what he considered sound policy or against what he regarded as evil. He seems never to have known what the sensation was of being overawed by anybody, no matter what the circumstances nor what his opponent's prestige or reputation. If necessary, he was prepared to stand up against the majority of his own party in the House or the sentiment of his own state or even his own district, as in 1868 and again in 1878 on currency questions, when he spoke and voted, as he said, "alone in the Mississippi valley" against inflation.

To criticise Garfield's kind of leadership for "weakness" is only possible to those who regard self-assertion as the one quality essential in this connection. It is interesting to compare Garfield's methods in carrying a bill with those of his contemporary, Schenck. Garfield conducted his measures with a persuasive introduction, marked courtesy and deference to any critic, great patience in answering questions and explaining purposes, and tireless tenacity in making the necessary motions. What he relied upon, nine times out of ten, to defend an item against an attack was his own power

of clear statement and argument. He kept his head and his temper; he was usually better grounded in the facts than any assailant; he was conciliatory on matters of detail, firm on those of principle. He was adroit in the use of motions and points of order, but he never degenerated into a mere fighter on technicalities. Schenck, on the other hand, announced bluntly exactly what he intended to do, and then started in to do it, hammering, fighting, quashing assailants, blocking antagonistic amendments, asserting himself as the driving power at every instant. One gets the impression of a strong, pugnacious personality in Schenck's case that Garfield did not exhibit. But it is found to be true that the moment Schenck lost a compact party majority behind him a large part of his power evaporated. He had little or no ability to persuade. In the summer of 1868, in the fight over the bond-taxing amendments to the funding bill, Garfield actually superseded him as leader of the sound money forces in the house, owing to his superior suppleness, readiness and debating skill.

On the whole, it is probable that Garfield accomplished quite as much by his methods as Schenck did by his. Furthermore, there is not room for many Schencks at once in a legislative body; men of the Garfield type are quite as necessary and on the whole quite as effective. But at the moment the man who fights and asserts his authority is the man who compels respect among the unthinking, even if he stirs antagonism.

A somewhat similar comparison was drawn between Garfield and Blaine by Smalley, in the *Philadelphia Times*, 1880: "As a leader in the House he is more cautious and less dashing than Blaine and his judicial turn of mind makes him too prone to look for two sides of a question to be an efficient partisan. When the issue fairly touches his convictions, however, he becomes thoroughly aroused and strikes tremendous blows. Blaine's tactics were to continually harass the enemy by sharp-shooting surprises and picket firing. Garfield waits for an opportunity to deliver a pitched battle, and his generalship is shown to best advantage when the

fight is a fair one and waged on grounds where each party thinks itself strongest. Then his solid shot of argument are exceedingly effective."¹

In Blaine's "Eulogy" the three men whom he ranked as leaders superior to Garfield were Clay, Douglas and Stevens, each of whom led the House or Senate in a fight against the executive. It is an interesting comment on Blaine's idea of leadership that what he ranks as the supreme example was Clay's forcing Tyler out of the Whig party in 1841, at the cost of ruining almost every one of his own legislative plans. Evidently to Blaine it was a far greater feat for Clay to retain party leadership, at the expense of wrecking the whole Whig program, than it would have been to avoid a rupture and to seek, by a process of compromise, to make a successful party record in Congress. Garfield, in Clay's place, would have exhausted his ingenuity in trying to reach an agreement with Tyler rather than to start in by trying to override him. His attitude in 1866 toward Johnson, and his own leadership in 1878, when he exerted all his skill to prevent an open rupture between the Republicans and Hayes, furnishes an example. A spectacular fight, such as Blaine admired, had no attractions, and to score a striking personal success regardless of the legislative consequences would never have entered his head as a goal worth striving for.

The careers of scores of public men have shown that there is a form of leadership which, resting on neither fear nor domination, has a strength and security far surpassing the temporary prominence of the fighting leader. Such was that of Garfield in 1877-1880; slower in arriving, lacking in spectacular aspects, but none the less real and firmly founded. It is not without significance that when Garfield's career was suddenly terminated he was going from success to success, while he had seen those very contemporaries who excelled him as fighting leaders end their Congressional careers in defeat and humiliation—Butler, Schenck, Conkling, even Blaine himself, who never regained the seat in the Senate he left in 1881.

¹ Quoted in *Ashtabula Sentinel*, April, 1880.

A very just and penetrating comment of a somewhat similar type was made upon Garfield by A. G. Riddle, in the *History of Lake and Geauga Counties*, published in 1878. After sketching his life he asked: "What is the lack in Garfield? What is the thing wanting? Not large and obvious. Some little thing wanting to completeness. . . . Instances are mentioned where he has unexpectedly failed, in that he has not met the demands of the occasion, or of his friends' expectations; and in a most baffling and unsatisfactory way, a half-score of times. It has been defined as a lack of moral courage. . . . More than once it has appeared . . . that important changes have occurred in Mr. Garfield's career without much intelligent action on his part, when the matter was seemingly within his control. . . . Why didn't he defeat the salary bill? Why dont he lead his party in the House? Long service, rare ability, complete mastery of the essentials, quickness, temper, personal bearing, absence of enmities all unite. The reins trail carelessly through the hall, are thrown over his desk repeatedly, are sometimes in his hands and are admirably used on occasion. Why dont he take them firmly, as his, assert himself, be the man he is, and make the most of it? Why indeed? That is the question. Why has he not grasped the Ohio senatorship or done half a score of things?"

Riddle then answered his question. "His lack is egoism; if the absence of that quality is a lack; if, other things being nearly equal, a course is open to him which he can take without self-assertion, he will take it. So of that notable case of the salary bill . . . self-assertion, egoism, the thing I, was the thing to defeat it and hence the bill passed. That setting oneself up above all others is not in his nature."¹

What lends particular interest to this critique of Riddle's is that Garfield himself read and approved it. The journal ran (October 12, 1878): "Riddle's sketch of my life is the best that has yet been written. His criticisms of my character are revelations of myself to myself and I think are in the main correct." Still more important is the fact that Mrs.

¹ *History of Lake and Geauga Counties*, p. 76.

Garfield also heartily agreed with Riddle's analysis (journal, October 13). Anyone who has followed Garfield's career from youth to manhood will recognize in this a permanent trait, one that had interposed time after time to prevent Garfield from seizing advancement, using an occasion to promote his fortunes or even defending himself when assailed. In a public man such an unwillingness to exert himself on his own behalf may amount to an undoubted weakness, as Garfield himself repeatedly acknowledged in his letters and journals. But while this trait made itself felt at certain crises, as pointed out by Riddle, it certainly did not prevent Garfield from attaining, within a few years from the time it was written, to the highest political positions in the gift of the Republican party in the House, in the State of Ohio and, ultimately in the United States. Interesting as a psychological peculiarity, it cannot be said to have played a really decisive part in his career. At most it can only have retarded his progress.

The position and reputation enjoyed by Garfield at the end of his seventeen years' service in the House form the best measure of its value. As Blaine phrased it, after comparing him to Clay and others, "He could not do what they did, but he could do what they could not and in the breadth of his Congressional work he left that which will longer exert a potential influence among men and which, measured by the severe test of posthumous criticism, will secure a more enduring and more enviable fame."¹ The editorial of the *New York Times*, already quoted, went on to say, in discussing candidates for the succession to his leadership who were better tacticians (December 11, 1880): "The gentlemen who appear to aspire to the position . . . have, some of them, qualities which he lacked. Unfortunately none of them has so far given evidence to any marked degree of that which he possessed. None of them approaches him as a speaker, in the gift of comprehensive and symmetrical statement, or in that varied and extensive knowledge historical and legal, which

¹ "Eulogy," p. 35.

gave to his speeches an influence reaching far beyond the House of Representatives."

As for his actual hold over the House, a good characterization was given by Banks in his oration of 1881:¹ "The pressure for action is often disorderly and violent. Little courtesy is wasted on such occasions where one or two hundred members are shouting for the floor; and when one is named by the speaker it must be a strong man ready, able, eloquent to gain or hold the ear of the House. Garfield never failed in this. His look drew audience and attention. He was never unprepared, never tedious, always began with his subject and took his seat when he had finished. He had few controversies and was never called to order for any cause. He was a debater rather than an orator; always courteous, intelligent, intelligible and honorable. The House listened to him with rapt attention and he spoke with decisive effect upon its judgment. As chairman or prominent member of the principal business committees of the House, Garfield had an easy access to the floor and an eager assembly as his audience. . . . Few men in the history of the House of Representatives have acquired a higher reputation and none will be more kindly and permanently remembered."

Moreover, and what strongly impresses one who follows his career through the volumes of the *Congressional Globe and Record*, he invariably took high ground. In the midst of hot wrangling debate and angry personalities, his speeches came in on a higher plane. "He was ever grave, earnest," said Hoar,² "addressing himself only to the reason and conscience of his auditors. You will search his speeches in vain for an appeal to a base motive or an evil passion." "Undoubtedly there were others who had more to do with marshalling the political forces of the House. But almost from the time he entered he was the leader of its best thought. . . . Many men who are called great political leaders are really nothing but great political followers. They study the currents of public sentiment which other men form. They

¹ Eulogy in City of Boston, *Memorial of James A. Garfield*, p. 66.

² *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 403.

use as instruments opinions which they never espoused till they became popular. General Garfield always consulted with care the temper of the House in the conduct of measures which were under his charge. But he was remarkably independent in forming his judgments and inflexible in adhering to them on all great essential questions."

Another younger colleague, Butterworth, said the same thing, in a little different way. "His strength as a leader was due to his unswerving love of right and his unmatched ability in satisfying minds that he sought with singleness of purpose, ways which wisdom commended with truth and justice approved."¹ His editorial friend of the nineteenth district, J. O. Converse of Chardon, put it this way,² "Though an acknowledged leader he always led the thought rather than the tactics of the House and this was, to him, an ideal leadership."

The position he held in the House in the last years of his service is reflected in the impression he produced upon the rising leaders of the next Congressional generation. The tremendous effect that his speech of November 16, 1877, against inflation produced upon McKinley in his first session has been mentioned.³ Reed⁴ "expressed the opinion that he was the ablest debater with whom he had served in the House of Representatives." J. C. Burrows of Michigan, says his biographer,⁵ on entering the House "found Garfield the Republican leader on the floor. Burrows seems, consciously or unconsciously, to have selected Garfield as a model, just as earlier he had taken Webster." This was the more remarkable in that his brother, J. B. Burrows of Painesville, had been an embittered assailant of Garfield in 1874 and 1876.

That there is a place in our American public life—and an honored place—for men who lead without rancor, persuade rather than order and care less for their own personal

¹ Sen. Misc. Doc. No. 69, 49 Cong., 1 sess., p. 55.

² *Garfield the Ideal Man*, p. 44.

³ Chap. XX, p. 660.

⁴ S. W. McCall, *Thomas B. Reed*, p. 90.

⁵ W. D. Orcutt, *Burrows of Michigan*, Vol. I, p. 173.

success than for the fate of measures, is abundantly shown by the rank accorded to such men as Franklin and Jay among the earlier statesmen, and Lincoln among Garfield's contemporaries. And even though the premature ending of his life prevented Garfield from attaining to their stature in our history, it is with them that he is to be grouped as a worthy representative of their type of political temper and action.

CHAPTER XX

THE OPEN-MINDED THINKER

THE qualities which Garfield showed as Congressman and orator were, to a large extent, the full development of traits already prominent in his youthful days. Such were his forensic zest and facility, his feeling for literary form, his habit of thorough preparation, all of which can be seen in his speaking at Williams and the Eclectic, his early campaigning in Ohio, and still more in the Denton debate. But others fully as important in all his Congressional career, such as his moderation, his breadth of view, his discarding of all personal contentiousness and above all his scientific spirit, represented something scarcely hinted at in the days of Williams or the Eclectic. So prominent were these qualities in his whole life, no less so than in his Congressional career, that it is well worth while to devote a chapter to considering how they came into existence and to noting the various ways in which they affected his mature personality.

The letters and journals show that it was Garfield's army experience that hastened the process of transforming a rather sectarian teacher and preacher into a man of the world, in the best sense. To begin with, the conditions of army life rendered impossible from the start any continuance of a puritanical and censorious attitude toward others, for he was called upon to adjust himself to constant contact with men of every possible variety of personal standards. At the start there can be little doubt that the profanity, vulgarity and easy morals of many shocked him, as sundry letters reveal; but after 1863 he ceased to comment on this side of army life. As chief of staff it was his business to be on as good terms as possible with every general officer, regardless of his personal habits, and one may surmise that it was during the nine months between January and October of that

year that he learned what he never afterwards forgot, the art of getting on with all sorts and conditions of men. By the time that Garfield entered Congress he had become an individual who, while holding to his own standards, no longer applied them mercilessly to his colleagues and acquaintances. If he was to achieve any personal leadership or exert any influence other than a purely intellectual one he had to learn to "live and let live." The political world of the sixties was full of crudeness and coarseness and the war and camp habits had left deep traces of vice and dissipation on many, public men and private individuals alike. Taking men as he found them, then, Garfield endeavored to live his own life and to meet people upon such common grounds as existed in general sociability and friendliness.

But this was not all. Garfield did not merely become tolerant; that might be laid to mere facility of temper or lack of definite canons. He became genuinely charitable and just in his judgments, consciously trying, even under exasperating circumstances, to be scrupulously fair to all men. Of this the foregoing chapters have given abundant evidence, none more striking, perhaps, than his comments on his Congressional critics in the *Crédit Mobilier* report. For the sake of further illustrating this unusual trait, sundry observations from his journals and letters upon distinguished contemporaries may be added. If they lack the acrid interest pertaining to the diaries of such men as John Quincy Adams or Gideon Welles, they at least reveal an effort at fair appraisal which the others totally lacked. A case where Garfield made a conscious effort to be just was shown in his comments when Zachariah Chandler was appointed to succeed Columbus Delano in the Interior Department in 1876. In his journal Garfield wrote (October 21): "This is most unfortunate. Chandler is a man of coarse fibre, with little culture; intemperate both in drink and in habits of mind. There runs through his character a strong infusion of the 'bummer.' He is an extremist in politics who, though he has been right on many important questions hitherto, is not a man to grapple with delicate questions." But on October 30

he wrote the following letter of retraction to Hinsdale: "In regard to Chandler's appointment to the Secretaryship of the Interior I have had a curious experience of mind. I felt that an outrage had been committed; that there had been a fearful letting down of the standard of qualification by his appointment, and I still feel so in some degree, but a few days after his appointment I picked up the Sunday '*Capitol*' in which I knew there would be the heaviest attack of which the editor was capable, on the appointment. I read the article through and was surprised to find how feeble [it was] and really how little was said that was not mere clap-trap. And beyond the single fact that he is not a gentleman of that depth of culture and habit that ought to be promoted to so important a place (which of course is an important one) I could find no strong reason against his appointment. . . . I am disposed to think that a large share of your feeling and mine on the subject is the result of the constant clamor that has been raised against him in common with a large number of leading Republicans. We have been insensibly led to consent to this clamor without analyzing its unreasonableness."

It may be added that Garfield revised his opinion of Grant also, and did it in a way that has been approved by subsequent historical judgment. At the end of his first term Garfield thought him utterly unfitted for the office, but after 1874 his opinion changed, until he was able to write in his journal of October 18, 1876: "Today I was again impressed with the belief that when his Presidential term is ended, General Grant will regain his place as one of the very foremost of Americans. His power of staying, his imperturbability, has been of incalculable value to the nation, and will be prized more and more as his career recedes." And when, on March 5, after Hayes's inauguration, Grant turned the government over to his successor, Garfield wrote, "No American has carried away greater fame out of the White House than this silent man who leaves it today."

Regarding Lincoln it took longer to efface the war-time impression of his apparent weakness and inefficiency. In

1866, when Garfield was suddenly called upon by Colfax to move an adjournment of the House on the anniversary of Lincoln's assassination, he responded in a brief speech which paid a tribute to Lincoln simply as a fine character. He was not yet ready to say more. But in 1878, when he made a formal speech on the acceptance by the House of the gift from Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, of Carpenter's painting of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, he had gained a better perspective. Pointing to the painting he said: "The man who presided over that council, who inspired and guided its deliberations, was a character so unique that he stood alone, without a model in history or a parallel among men. . . . Gifted with an insight and a foresight which the ancients would have called divination, he saw, in the midst of darkness, the logic of events and forecasted the result. From the first, in his own quaint, original way without ostentation or offense to his associates, he was pilot and commander of his administration. He was one of the few great rulers whose wisdom increased with his power and whose spirit grew gentler and tenderer as his triumphs were multiplied."¹

Garfield was by no means blind to the foibles of men whom he both liked and admired. Evarts, for example, he recognized as a lawyer of the first rank, and his arguments before the Electoral Commission commanded his enthusiastic admiration; but he did not ignore the peculiar egotism which led him to be too verbose and too self-centered. Garfield described to his wife how Evarts entertained him while spending the day in New York, *en route* for the New Hampshire spring campaign. "It was a pleasure," he wrote (March 7, 1876), "to listen to the brilliant talk of the great lawyer.

. . . . He gave me a minute account of the two journeys to Europe during the war which he undertook for Mr. Seward to prevent complications and perhaps war with England and France; and then he gave me the interior history of the part he took in the great argument before the International Tribunal at Geneva. . . . It was really a great treat to

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 968-971.

listen to Mr Evarts and to measure my mind by his. I suspect that no amount of brilliancy in a man can make his egotism altogether agreeable; for pleasant as it was to listen to Evarts, I could not forget that he was making himself and his own achievements the centre of nearly seven hours of talk. Is that *my* way when I talk to people? Don't fail to tell me so if it is."

A man to whom Garfield devoted much more than the usual attention in his journal was Robert G. Ingersoll, famous as an orator and still more famous as a fighting atheist, with whom, in spite of his views, Garfield became very friendly. It was in September, 1876, in the Maine campaign, that Garfield first heard him speak and commented: "Ingersoll is a remarkable man, of pictorial mind and wonderful command of language. I doubt, however, whether he does not mar much of the effectiveness of his speaking by the extravagance of his statements." The next day he continued: "After breakfast had a long visit with Ingersoll and was interested in studying the peculiarities of his remarkable mind. He is poetic, full of keen and exquisite sensibilities, equally full of prejudice and is, withal, a highly original mind. His wife shares fully his atheistic views, and seems entirely content with them. I doubt if these views will sustain them when the shadows of life fall heavily and deepen into the darkness of death."

To his wife he wrote (September 2, 1876): "Ingersoll has a wonderful power of creating enthusiasm in his audience. I listened to his speech with great interest and delight. In many respects he lacks calmness and dignity. Frequently he is lacking in fairness, but he possesses that indefinable quality which is the soul of oratory and which carries a listener captive in spite of himself. I have sometimes caught the same spirit, but he lives in it. It breathes through his commonplace thoughts and finds its way to his hearers by its own mysterious force. I imagine that much of his power is present in speech which is lost by print. I so much want you to hear him and help me solve the mystery of his power."

In 1879 Garfield was present at an occasion when Inger-

soll's atheism was put to the test. "June 3. At four o'clock I attended the funeral of Ebon C. Ingersoll who was with me in Congress several terms. I append to this page [clipping inserted] the remarkable address read by his brother Robert G. Ingersoll as he stood beside the coffin. I was deeply impressed with the utter breakdown of atheistical philosophy in the presence of death." To his wife he described the episode even more fully (June 3, 1879), calling it "the most painful scene I have ever witnessed, and I hope to be spared such another."

An almost equally famous orator, but very different personality, was Henry Ward Beecher, for whom Garfield, after he had outgrown his Disciple bigotry, came to have a great admiration. When in 1874 Beecher's difficulties with Tilton became public, Garfield rallied instantly to his support. On July 24 he wrote in the journal: "The Beecher-Tilton scandal is the theme of all tongues. I believe in Beecher.

I have had no confidence in Tilton since I saw him in Washington six years ago. He seemed to be overful of himself." "Aug. 14 In the evening I read aloud to Burke and Dr. Streater and wife, Beecher's defense which is a most masterly production of his kingly intellect and confirms me in my intuition of the truth in the case and of his character. It shows some weakness in his judgment of men . . . but no one is great all round. I have been made deeply indignant at the low sneers and insinuations of men (who ought to be above such baseness) against Beecher. . . . Perhaps the unjust attacks from which I have recently suffered have given me a bias in favor of one accused."

When the trial began he followed it with deep interest and in April, 1875, he managed to witness it, reporting his impressions fully to his wife. "The trial," he wrote (April 5), "was in progress and the room very crowded. I sent in my card to Judge Fullerton and he . . . took me to a seat by his own table directly in front of the Judge and the witness stand. I had become so much interested in the development of the case, and especially in Mr. Beecher's testimony that I was anxious to see the parties and get all the scene

more vividly impressed on my mind. . . . In the judges' stand sat a large number of the leading judges and lawyers of N. Y. City; among them David Dudley Field whom you know. . . . I was greatly moved by the appearance of Mrs. Beecher. Her hair is almost perfectly white, her face is pale and bears evident marks of feeble health; but her eye is lighted with the unmistakable gleam of faithful love for her husband in this supreme crisis of his fate. . . . Beecher bore himself grandly and beautifully on the stand. I could see the indignation work in his face as the questions of accusation were read to him. There was a strange blending of solemnity, feeling, power, pathos and humor in his remarkable face. He held in his hand a small bunch of wild violets of which he occasionally inhaled the odor. His replies were frank, direct, full, careful, characteristic and he carried the spectators with him by what seemed to be an irresistible tide of truth and sympathy. It does not seem possible that he can fail to carry the jury, though there is one man who seems to have an almost idiotic stare and who, I am sure, has no comprehension of the case in any way."

Yet Garfield was not a blind admirer of Beecher. He wrote in his diary (April 4): "I believe in Beecher's innocence, but I think he is a great, sentimental, big-hearted booby in his relations to and his judgment of the people around him. Perhaps the elements that made him so powerful a preacher, make him also the boy he is. It is manifest that he has fallen into the hands of a most unscrupulous set of rascals."

The open-minded fairness which Garfield showed toward the men he knew he also displayed toward the books he read. His early censoriousness had now vanished and he approached every sort of writing as a seeker after knowledge and enlightenment. Of course he retained his likes and dislikes, but of partisanship or prejudice his judgments seemed utterly devoid. The extent of his reading was enormous. As Banks said:¹ "He was animated by an intense and sleepless spirit of acquisition. His ambition was for the

¹ Eulogy in City of Boston, *Memorial of James A. Garfield*, p. 62.

acquisition of knowledge. From early youth to the day of his last illness it was a consuming passion." His devoted friend and correspondent, Hinsdale, described this habit as he had come to know it by experience. "In later years," he said,¹ "he read everywhere—on the cars, in the omnibus, and after retiring at night. If he was leaving Washington for a few days, and had nothing requiring immediate attention on hand, he would go to the great Library of Congress and say to the librarian, 'Mr. Spofford, give me something that I don't know anything about.' A stray book coming to him in this way would often lead to a special study of the subject. In this way he kept his mind fresh and full. But with all his reading he could not have done the work that he did, but for the ready and powerful grasp with which he took hold of a subject and for the wondrous ease and quickness with which he could organize the material that he needed. He seemed to see at a glance the relations of things. In his studies he strove to get hold of the underlying principle and was never satisfied until he could reduce facts to order."

The references in his journals from 1872 to 1881 show that what Hinsdale said was literally true. In reading hundreds of books in every field of human thought, including novels, he never failed to set down his judgment or his criticisms. He apparently could not read carelessly or merely to kill time; he was compelled to absorb the significance and estimate the value of everything he read. An amusing example of this trait appears in the journal for November 23, 1876: "Took the train for Pittsburg. I opened my carpet-bag to take out Wilhelm Meister which I had promised myself the enjoyment of on the journey but was greatly disgusted to find I had taken Mrs. Holmes' 'Dora Deane.'" After a while, finding time hang heavy, Garfield proceeded for diversion to read and analyze the exceedingly trashy story with all the intellectual concentration which he might have devoted to the great Goethe, and produced a curious critique covering several pages, which still exists among his papers. On returning to Washington he went to the library

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 84.

and "found to my disgust that Mrs. Holmes has written eleven novels and is still blazing away."

A list of the names of the books he read and discussed would be a catalogue of the principal authors, English and American, of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to see how vigorously he responded to some of the biographies. "Nov. 23, 1873 Read with a delight I have rarely felt for any book the Autobiography of John Stuart Mill. It is amazing to contemplate the amount of work he accomplished while yet a mere boy." After he had finished it he began to have doubts. "I was fascinated by it," he wrote to Hinsdale (December 10, 1873). "But, notwithstanding his remarkable culture and career I cannot believe it was a natural and healthy growth, and if one of my boys *could* be what Mill was, I would not allow him to be submitted to the discipline through which Mill passed." A month later, having heard things disparaging to Mill's judgment, he experienced a definite revulsion and closed a letter of unfavorable criticism with the final phrase, "So much for Mill."

The next year he had a tremendous enthusiasm over Goethe, reading his autobiography and Lewes's life. "The development of the poet's mind," he wrote (November 4, 1874), "is among the most wonderful things I have seen." Ten days later he received from the Congressional Library twenty-six volumes of Goethe's works and began a campaign, reading on Sundays, in the evenings, on the train and in spare moments. A year after that he was enthusiastic over the life of Ticknor, but before he had finished it he began Trevelyan's *Macaulay* and was swept quite off his feet by the narrative. April 25, 1876, he reported: "Read Macaulay until nearly twelve o'clock. I shall be glad if my reading of this fascinating book aids in removing the sense of the hopeless inferiority of almost every other man in comparison with him. For myself, however, I shall feel the hopeless distance between myself and him." The next day he wrote: "I am strongly drawn to the brave, bold scholar, who loved so strongly and hated so royally. I am a poor hater."

In 1878 he read two lives of Bismarck and recommended them to Hinsdale. "I regard Bismarck," he added (April 23, 1878), "as the ablest man Europe has produced since Napoleon I." In 1879 he read two lives of Napoleon, Hazlitt's and Lanfrey's, and the memoirs of Metternich. Regarding Napoleon he recorded this judgment. "May 16, 1880 I find this time, as frequently before, great difficulty in judging Napoleon severely. I suppose I ought to come to a conclusion very unfavorable to his character but in spite of my reasoning to the contrary I find myself indignant at the alliance which crushed him. With all his inconsistencies he was the hammer that broke in pieces the Divine Right of Kings." Reading the life of Sam Adams led to a generalization that from Garfield, the apostle of reasonableness, was a further evidence of broad-mindedness. It "leads me to renew my faith in radicalism," he wrote (December 16, 1876); "none but radicals have ever accomplished anything in great crises. Conservatives have their place in the piping times of peace, but in emergencies only rugged men amount to much. I fancy that the character of such men is usually lovely only when seen from a distance like the scene painting at the theatre."

When he read such books as Leslie Stephen's on *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* and Goldwin Smith's *The Decline of Party Government* he made comments that well illustrated the candor of his attitude. "Aug. 20 In the morning read Stephen's remarkable book. He makes a powerful attack on Mill's doctrine of Liberty. He seems to belong to the Carlyle school, the worshippers of force, who think the mass of mankind are asses and need the strong curb and hand of a master. There may be more truth in this view than we Republicans are willing to admit." The next day, after summarizing Stephen's attack on the doctrine of religious toleration, he concluded: "Every page of his book challenges thought and sets the tide of reflection in flow. But I am resting now, not thinking closely."

Of Goldwin Smith's attack on party politics, on the other hand, he thought little. "To me it is altogether a disap-

pointing paper," he wrote to Hinsdale (October 22, 1877). "Many of his facts . . . are interesting, but his suggestions of substitutes for party government are too vague to be of any value. While there are grave differences of opinion among men on questions of vital importance . . . there will be parties based upon these differences, and the thing most desired is not how to avoid the existence of parties but how best to keep them within proper bounds."

Twice only does the name of Mark Twain appear in the journal, for the later "Twain legend" was far in the future. On January 4, 1873, he said: "Read Mark Twain's Great Beef Contract to the Committee. Twain is the most successful of our humorous writers in my judgment." This skit was a savage satire on the exorbitant and corrupt private claims which, by sheer persistence and patience, were often engineered through Congress. Garfield's interest in it was obviously professional. In 1876, January 24, he wrote: "Read Mark Twain's article in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled 'A Literary Nightmare' a very clever story." But no other humorist's name appears. Garfield preferred Horace and Ovid to Mark Twain.

Toward the end of the seventies Garfield became interested in the theater and the journal shows that he went constantly with his wife, or with Rockwell or Swaim, to hear the best there was to be heard. In 1874 he saw Booth in Julius Cæsar and Lawrence Barrett, later, in the same play and John McCulloch in his whole repertoire of heavy tragedies, —Macbeth, The Gladiator, Othello, Virginius, Lear and Richard III. All the leading actors and actresses of that epoch file before one in turning the pages of the journal from 1874 to 1880—Rignold, Jefferson, Sothern, Boucicault, Maggie Mitchell, Charlotte Cushman, Janauschek, Clara Morris, Kate Claxton, Adelaide Neilson. On all of these Garfield left comments, discriminating and appreciative, although he seems to have enjoyed the comedians better, particularly Jefferson and Sothern in "Lend me Five Shillings," "The Crushed Tragedian" and "A Regular Fix," from which he "came home at eleven with sides sore with laughing."

The only two dramatic compositions in which Garfield found nothing to admire were plays in which the humorists of the time sought to satirize the short-comings of the age. After Garfield's sufferings in the *Crédit Mobilier* affair, and his experience of the boundless credulity of the sensational press, it was not to be expected that he should enjoy "The Gilded Age" (December 30, 1874). He called it "a piece whose stupidity is only equalled by the brilliant acting of Colonel Sellers. The play is full of malignant insinuations and would lead the hearer to believe that there is no virtue in the world, in public or in private life." The other one, "Inflation," struck him as even worse. "Apr. 18, 1876 It is one of the cheap and extravagant specimens of literature which I think will fail as it certainly ought to. The play is based on the assumed universal corruption of public men presented in the baldest and most absurd form. The piece was written by D. R. Locke [Petroleum V. Nasby] and indicates how low down he must have fallen as a thinker."

Garfield went now and then to opera, hearing Clara Louise Kellogg in "The Bohemian Girl," for instance, and Christine Nilsson in "Romeo and Juliet" with pleasure but without any attempt at analysis; but when the operetta of "Pinafore" captured all America with its resistless humor Garfield went no less than four times in 1879, and the next year heard "The Pirates of Penzance" with the greatest delight.

Toward music, as an art, Garfield showed an attitude of baffled uncertainty. Dramatic art he could judge; the orator knew something of the actor's problems, but in music he found himself among unknown elements. The trouble was that here was a field where none of Garfield's philosophical analysis or literary culture was of service, as appears with great clearness in his reflections on a Thomas concert, November 18, 1874. "Twenty violins and forty other instruments sounding in harmony make a great volume of melody. There was much in the concert that delighted me, but I do not sufficiently understand the language of music to be able to translate its meaning. Its riddles pique me, and I some-

times wonder whether it has any meaning at all. I wish I could converse with some great master of music and learn something of his mental processes." Who can doubt that if his eager mind had been given the chance he could have developed into an appreciative listener to the finest music? What he wanted was the intellectual intention and content, and that was to be had for the seeking.

With the habits of thorough preparation for Congressional speeches described in the preceding chapter, and with such habits of wide and diversified reading, it was inevitable that Garfield should be one of the two or three most extensive users of the Congressional Library. Only Charles Sumner, the classical scholar, and, oddly enough, O. P. Morton, the ruthless practical politician of Indiana, were rivals in this respect. A paragraph on Garfield, quoted from "Tilton's Golden Age" in the *Ashtabula Sentinel* in 1871, alluded to this habit. "Few public men in Washington keep up literary studies. General Garfield is one of the few. No one more constant in attendance at the capitol than he; no one more laborious on committees; yet he keeps abreast of current literature, allowing no good book to escape him. When a long-winded, an unimportant debate blows up in the House watch Garfield. He is an economist of time. Chatting and button-holing as he goes, he quietly glides out, passes through the rotunda and escapes into the serene realm of Mr. Spofford, where, amid all that amplitude of books, he regales himself in reading and in literary conversation. He and Mr. Spofford are close friends and whenever a box of new books arrives from Europe or New York a message gets to Mr. Garfield to that effect and he has the first peep."

His journal shows him constantly going there for information, and indicates that he drew out vast quantities of books and documents when preparing an address or speech. In a home letter of June 15, 1878, for instance, written after clearing up his study in the Washington house, he said: "A pile of books three feet high lies on the floor waiting for the Cong. Library cart. The pile is full of memo-

ries of Caesar, Shakespeare and Tariff." He found it hard to write anything away from this reservoir of facts. Trying in June, 1873, to prepare an historical address he groaned to Hinsdale over the difficulties of working in Hiram. "Every day," he said (June 25), "I miss Spofford and our great Library of Congress."

It is interesting to see how to one of his early studies Garfield turned again and again for diversion, namely, his Latin authors. In December, 1866, he had the satisfaction of detecting and exposing Charles Sumner, the acknowledged scholar of the Senate, in a classical blunder in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* of December. Sumner had located the Sirens close to Scylla and Charybdis, so that Odysseus, lashed to the mast, listened to the Sirens' song while steering between Scylla and Charybdis. But Garfield pointed out that the traditional localities associated with these myths were over a hundred miles apart and that Homer himself nowhere places the two in connection (Hinsdale, December 5). A month later he observed in a letter: "My love for Latin and Greek and the history of antiquity is growing every day. I have stolen many hours since I have been here and given them to Cicero and Horace." (Hinsdale, January 1, 1867.)

In the midst of hard work, he would go back to Horace, as in 1872, when he carried on a correspondence with Professor Demmon of Hiram on the construction of the seventh and eighth verses of Ode VII, Book 4. Occasionally when caught at church with a tedious preacher he set himself to work at a mental translation of an ode. In the summer and autumn of 1873 he read Pliny's letters, got very much interested in them, thought of making a translation and pondered on the economic facts suggested by them. "If I had time," he reflected (July 21), "I would try to write a book on the distribution of wealth among the Romans. It must be that the enormous wealth of a small class left the multitude extremely poor. I would be glad to know what was the character of a distribution that produced such results." Next he read on the train a Latin life of Pliny, and presently turned to Cicero's "De Senectute," finding it (August

5) "very clever and adroit but hardly sound," following that up with "Baird's book on the pronunciation of ancient languages" and regretting that he had lost most of what he learned of German in college. "The stores of German scholarship ought to be open to a man who wishes a liberal and broad culture. I am not too old to master it, but perhaps too busy. We shall see." (August 5, 1873.)

In June, 1874, thoroughly exhausted after the session and with a severe political contest before him, he arrived at Hiram. "Every bone and muscle of my body is tired and my mind is equally jaded. I have mitigated the situation by reading Lucretius '*De Natura Rerum*' a noble and beautiful protest against the crushing tyranny of religion as he knew it." In the spring of 1876, inspired by the life of Macaulay, he took up a new author. "May 1 During the evening ran through the biography of Ovid and also read portions of the *Tristia*, moved thereto by a passage in the second volume of Macaulay's *Life*. I have determined to get a complete set of the Latin Classics."

In December, 1877, the children's governess having asked him about the Sybils, he read Ovid, Livy and Julius Obsequens on the subject, and recorded his conclusions in the journal. Then, satisfied, he turned to other things. One gets the impression that he found great satisfaction in thus dipping back into the old springs of literature and legend, somewhat as the English statesmen Macaulay and Gladstone have done, but to a less degree. Yet the same spirit was there.

Garfield's books were his friends and instructors. In them he found escape from Congressional trials and refreshment for his soul. Reading Thackeray, or Horace, or Goethe, or Shakespeare, or the political and social essays of the day, he could forget the infinite delays and petty frictions, the futile planning and unwelcome compromising of Congressional legislation, as he sat in his room at Washington in the late hours, or traveled on long, slow, railway journeys or rested, in exhaustion, at Hiram or Mentor after the session or the stumping campaign was at an end. This joy never failed him.

As time went on, Garfield's early eagerness for more or less miscellaneous traveling became elevated into an intensely thoughtful and appreciative enjoyment of new places and people, his mind reacting to the novel impressions with the same responsiveness that he showed in the case of new books and new writers. A few extracts from his comments on some of his journeys may well be given to illustrate the nature of his enjoyment and of his observations.

His first extensive trip after the end of the war did not come until 1867, when, feeling thoroughly run down and suffering from sleeplessness, he took a vacation in Europe and induced his wife, after much hesitation, to accompany him. Sailing July 13 on *The City of London* from New York, they landed at Liverpool and made a series of rapid dashes, interspersed with brief pauses, to London, back to the west and north of England and into Scotland; across to Rotterdam, up the Rhine, across Switzerland and in Italy to Venice, Padua, Florence and Rome. Returning quickly to Paris for a short stay, they crossed once more to England, and finally sailed for home October 16.

It may be doubted if any travelers ever got more in less time. Garfield's journal and letters show that he "took in" everything with insatiable power of absorption and comprehension; architecture, people, famous buildings, sites of battles, paintings—all that the traveler usually sees. He made friends with chance acquaintances on trains and was invited to country places, picked up information from anybody on the continent who could speak English; gained information on the politics of the moment from newspapers and shopkeepers, and recorded scores of comments and observations.

It is perhaps most interesting to see the effect which two things produced on Garfield, the House of Commons and the city of Rome. The former he viewed with the eye of a debater and Congressman who had read deeply in English financial and political history and was prepared to study Parliament with sympathy. The circumstances were un-

usual, for it was during the struggle over the Reform Bill of 1867, introduced by the Derby administration and championed in the House by Disraeli, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Tory leader.

After having seen the Lords in debate several times, Garfield selected his time to visit the House, and on the evening of August 8 he played his strongest card with highly satisfactory results. "I sent Chase's letter to John Bright, who came out and got me in back of the peers' seat, under the Speaker's gallery where I had a fine view and where I staid except when divisions were being taken till near midnight.

Disraeli sat passionless and motionless except a trotting of the foot which all strong men are addicted to, or some similar motion, when drawn up to a strong pitch of intellectual activity and expectancy. His face reveals nothing. The most pointed allusions, either of logic, fact or wit fail to move a muscle or change a line of his expression." When the final debate on the reform bill began, Garfield described rather minutely the appearance of the leading figures.

"Disraeli," he wrote, "in a very calm, somewhat halting way goes over the chief points of the Lords' amendments. Puts them very adroitly and in a very conciliatory tone speaks about 20 minutes. Meanwhile Bright has been sitting on the second row and next to the gangway, taking a note now and then, manifesting a little nervousness in the hands and fingers, and occasionally passing his hand over his ample forehead. Mill is sitting down in his seat with his chin resting in the palm of his hand and giving close attention as he does to everything which passes. By the way his face greatly disappointments me in one respect. There is nothing of the Jovine breadth and fulness I expected. But there is great depth from brow to cerebellum and strong well-defined features to it. . . . Gladstone rises and opens the debate on the opposition side in an adroit speech of eight minutes, evidently reserving himself for a fuller assault later in the evening. Gladstone is the most unEnglish speaker I have yet heard and the best." John Bright, as might be expected,

drew Garfield's close attention. "With a form like Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, he has a large round face, fine massive head, and straight, almost delicate nose. He has a full rotund voice, like Gladstone is quite un-English in his style; that is, he speaks right on with but little of that distressful hobbling which marks the mass of parliamentary speakers. I am inclined to think it a piece of snobbery, which they think graceful and delicate. It puts me in misery and almost ruins a good thought."

The particular amendment was that of the so-called three-cornered constituency, intended to enable Tory minorities in liberal cities to have a chance of representation. Bright opposed it, but Garfield entered in his diary his approval of it, having read Mill and Hare on the subject. Bright's parliamentary bearing won his admiration. "Many speeches were leveled at him," he wrote, "but he like all politicians, seemed to have become a pachyderm and paid no attention to it. However much they may affect to despise him, they cannot blink the fact which even the *Times* admitted this morning, in a mean attack on him, that 'John Bright was the most skilful speaker in England and in some kinds of oratory the first orator.'"

Of Gladstone he wrote: "He spoke nearly an hour, going into the whole question with great clearness and incisive force. He spoke with much more feeling than any other except Bright and as much as he." Gladstone was followed by Robert Lowe. "He is nearly blind," wrote Garfield, "and spoke without notes and with his eyes apparently shut. He combines the sharpness of Sunset Cox, with a remarkable toughness of intellectual fibre which makes him a powerful assailant. It was exceedingly fine, the way he sought out and javellined the exposed joints of his antagonist's harness. Gladstone winced manifestly." The clause was finally carried by one majority. "I left the Commons," Garfield wrote, "a little before midnight, having witnessed the practical consummation of the greatest advance toward political liberty made in England in a century."

When Garfield visited Rome, what seems to have swayed

him were his memories of classical antiquity and his old-time Disciple antipathy to Catholicism. On arriving he went to the Hotel Minerva. "For two hours I could but little else," he wrote, "than sit in silence and try to repress the conflict of emotion that arose between my love of Classic Rome and my indignation at the infinite impertinence with which every emblem of its greatness I have yet seen has been converted into papal symbols. Went to the Pantheon, in and around it, and saw the noble portal disgraced by these words above it '*Indulgentia plenaria, quotidianis, perpetua pro vivis et defunctis.*' . . . Drove to Trajan's column and through the ancient Forum to the Coliseum and home again to sit and dream and be unutterably sad." Recovering from this first depression he devoted himself with the utmost zeal to seeing every relic of the ancient city and when he departed, October 1, he wrote: "Felt more regret than at any parting since I left home. Rome is indeed 'my country'—dead, but alive forevermore."

For the most part his reflections were literary and historical. He made one acute observation while in England as a result of the impression the enormous ruins of abbeys made on him. What he at once desired and found lacking was an adequate economic and social explanation. "What was the inside history," he queried (August 21, 1867), "of the origin, growth and fall of the abbeys of England? The amount of wealth, of architectural skill and religious enthusiasm which could have produced them is to me almost as great a phenomenon as the Crusades. I have not yet found any adequate explanation of it nor have I heard of any work which thoroughly handles the subject."

This was Garfield's only trip to Europe, but he found an equal zest, in subsequent years, in journeying to various parts of his own country, where his observations showed as much appreciation of the historic sites of New England or Louisiana or the Rocky Mountain frontier as of the ruins of the Eternal City. In the summer of 1869 he sent back to his wife an enthusiastic description of the Adams house in Quincy, where he had gone to discuss with C. F. Adams, Jr.,

the problem of railway statistics in the proposed census bill. "I have arisen before the family are stirring," he began (July 8), "to enjoy the scenery, to regale my heart with the associations, personal and historical, which belong to the interior and the exterior of this delightful old house, the ancestral home of the Adamses. . . . I have slept in an upper chamber in the third story, under the roof, with dormer windows, and from the east window I look out on the bay and catch a glimpse of the open sea. Every room is full of history. On the next floor below is the room where John Adams died. It is now used as the library of his grandson, Charles Francis Adams. Many original portraits are scattered through the house. . . . What a remarkable history this family has made."

After running through the earlier history, beginning with John Adams and characterizing the son and grandson, he came to the rising generation. Turning from Charles Francis Adams he said: "And now his family are showing even more marked ability. His oldest son, John Quincy, is the leader of the Democratic party in Massachusetts and I shall not be surprised to see him elected governor before long. Charles Adams is a very forcible and brilliant writer in the *North American Review* and is just appointed Commissioner of railroads for Mass. He is not more than 33 years old. Henry Adams, still younger, writes financial and other articles for the *Edinburg* and other foreign reviews as well as for our own, and is rapidly rising as a clear and powerful thinker and writer. Mary Adams, who is not more than 22, is very bright,—is very like the picture of her great grandmother Abigail and Brooks, the youngest boy, is now a senior in Harvard where every male Adams since and including John, in his direct line has graduated. I doubt if any family in England or America can show such a history."

The next morning he was shown by Henry Adams about the historic churches and places of Quincy, and, what impressed him still more, was given a glimpse of the Adams papers. "Before I left the Adams house I looked through a few of the manuscript journals and letters of John and

John Q. Adams. Charles Francis is now at work preparing a mass of them for publication. Do you suppose Hal or Jim will ever care to look over your letters to me and mine to you?"

The next day Garfield was introduced to one of the most celebrated things connected with Boston, as famous in its way as the Adams family household. This was "a fish dinner at Taft's" on Point Shirley in Boston harbor. "Taft," he wrote (July 9), "has studied the subject of fish and also of birds with the enthusiasm of an artist and the pride of a caterer and is the authority of the Hub. I confess I did not expect so much. But it really seemed as though Neptune and Pan had combined to make Taft successful. The first was a course of soup, in which clam chowder and fish chowder played a chief part. Then followed dishes of fish, the delicacy of which I cannot expect to describe. The rock bass, the perch, the deep sea flounder and to my taste best of all the turbot—each in turn elicited rounds of applause and were then received with inward satisfaction. Over the turbot came a classical discussion touching the comparison between the merits of the American fish and his transatlantic relative, the turbot of England, and the story was not neglected of the Roman Emperor Domitian, I believe, who when a live turbot was sent him from Britain, assembled the Senate to discuss the best mode of cooking it. This fact was satirized by Juvenal. After fish came woodcock and other birds, dishes that vied with the fishes and the dinner was ended with strawberries and ice cream."

In the late summer of 1871 he made a rapid trip to Sandy Valley in hopes of selling some land he had acquired there in 1865. It was a strange experience for him to see again the region where he had made his sole independent campaign, and to revisit it in late summer when his previous experience had been in winter and early spring. Two hasty notes to his wife show how it affected him. "Catlettsburg, Ky. Sept. 1, We arrived here at noon and are just starting up the Sandy in a buggy. The old places are full of memories and seem like the debris of a dream. I have met several old comrades

who fought beside me and also some who fought against me. They all seem glad to meet me. Prestonburg, Sept. 3, I reached here at ten oclock last evening and now at three p.m. am about to start back down the valley. It is seventy-five miles from the mouth of the Sandy and over such roads as your dear eyes never saw. . . . Reviewing the events that transpired in the winter of 1861-2 as they now appear to me in memory, aided by the sight of the old familiar places, I can hardly imagine how I succeeded in my campaign, or how I ventured to attempt it. The country is absolutely horrible in its wildness, and now that the bed of the river is almost literally a bed of sand, it seems as though life were dying out under the scorching sun that blazes in the valley. Every bend of the river, every salient point in the road, every leading feature of the mountain gave back to me its store of strange memories which it has kept nearly ten years, and kept in silent, mysterious faithfulness. I wanted you with me; you, with whom I should have felt free to tell the whole story of my campaign without the fear of being considered egotistical."

When he went on stumping tours in Maine or New Hampshire he studied with interest the local customs and the characteristic scenery, sending back comments, some of which have been quoted in earlier chapters. He also made his journeys to New Orleans in 1876 and to Mobile in 1877 the occasion of many social and political observations and lively descriptions of the semitropical surroundings. But his two most extensive journeys were undertaken in 1872 and 1875, respectively, in the then unfamiliar scenery of the Far West, and they deserve some consideration, since in them he gained a glimpse of a frontier now extinct. The first trip, already mentioned in Chapter XXII, was that to Montana, as commissioner to the Flathead Indians, to induce them to transfer themselves from the Bitter Root Valley Reservation to another further east, known as the Jocko Reservation. Starting August 1, Garfield left his wife at Leavenworth, Kansas, to visit the Swaim family while he went westward, over the Union Pacific, to Salt Lake City. Thence, after see-

ing the Mormon tabernacle and calling on sundry prominent Mormons, including Brigham Young, he went by stage and other conveyances to the northward over the high central plateau in sight of snow-covered mountains.

Garfield enjoyed it all hugely and made light of the sufferings of the party in the overcrowded stage, which he described with ludicrous accuracy. "Aug. 13 The back seat is occupied by a very gossipy Englishman, and his fidgety, gabby wife and a dunce of an impertinent boy. On the front seat sit three people facing the rear. One is a Salt Lake banker, a fine fellow of middle size. Next to him sits a good-looking portly doctor who is returning to Montana after three years absence, sick of civilization and the dulness of N. Y. City. Next sits a jolly, burly German woman weighing two hundred, who left Hamburg July 15 and has since then made 6400 miles of her way back to Montana which she left last October not intending to return. On the middle seat, which is six inches wide and 18 inches distant from the front seat, sits a lanky Methodist preacher, with a big basket full of chickens and apples and who shuts down his window to keep from catching cold and thus suffocates the rest of us. By his side sits Swaim and by him I sit. The six pair of legs interlock in the closest possible fit. The lean Methodist and slim banker making one set; Swaim and the plump doctor another, and the fat German woman and I are the third. If you can imagine a more united party than that telegraph me at my expense." When, the next day, the banker courteously changed places with Garfield to allow him to rest his head and doze, it aroused protest. "That arrangement brought the three fat people on one seat. As I squeezed into the seat the German woman said, 'This is worser as it was before.' " At one time the stage broke down, and Garfield and Swaim, with army experience back of them, seized the chance to get a nap on a buffalo robe on the prairie, "where there was at least room for our legs."

In spite of this, Garfield wrote in constant high spirits, noting in his journal the wonderfully invigorating air, the astonishing purity of the atmosphere, the wildness and

beauty of the scenery and the extraordinary character of western types. "I have greatly enjoyed my study of the drivers. Rode on top beside them nearly all day. They are a wild, rough, warm-hearted people and have a distinct place among American characters." At Virginia City he visited the governor of the territory and saw prominent citizens, after which he went to Helena, "a glorious ride among the mountains."

With his usual forethought Garfield had read Lewis and Clarke's travels before starting on the journey, so that when he found himself near his destination he had the added satisfaction of recognizing the very region where the explorers had crossed the great divide. At Helena he found he had to go to see the Indians himself. "The people and Indian agents have got the Flathead business in a tangle and I must leave here in a few minutes for the Bitter Root valley to quiet the unsettled feelings." (August 19.) After driving to Missoula, he wrote to his wife (August 23): "Most of the way was down the Cañon of the Hellgate. Sometimes our road lay along the beautiful plain among forests of yellow pine, sometimes for miles along the treeless valley, beside the river, and sometimes it wound along the precipitous sides of the hills five hundred feet above the river." In the journal he added: "Our ride today [August 20] was most exhilarating. Its interest was heightened by the spice of danger there was in it, from the furious rate at which we went. 'Steve,' our first driver out of Deer Lodge, was a rare character. His genius as a driver is exhibited in the ratio of his intoxication. He was very drunk and therefore exceedingly brilliant as a driver."

Garfield succeeded in his mission after a six hours' council with the Flatheads at Fort Owens in the Bitter Root valley and two more long conferences at the Jocko Reservation. Incidentally Garfield visited a camp of Nez Percé warriors and there, as well as among the Flatheads, he saw war dances. "The interview was somewhat tiresome," he wrote (August 22), "but there were points of great interest to me in the Indian modes of thought." To his wife he wrote (Au-

gust 23): "Yesterday in a great lodge made by uniting three lodges of buffalo skins, we held a solemn council with the chiefs and head men of the tribe. The council lasted five hours and closed with an apparently absolute refusal to be removed to their reservation. I pressed the case as skilfully as I could, and asked them to go with me and see the reservation before deciding. . . . I feel bound to do all in my power to save these noble Indians from the mistake they will make if they refuse. Moreover I greatly dislike to fail in anything I undertake. . . . I will make one more good try." The final signing of the agreement to move was followed, as usual, by the giving of presents, and, as usual, one important chief held out and refused to sign. Still Garfield thought his mission a success and on August 27 started on the homeward journey, being driven again by "Steve"—this time sober and very sluggish—and reveling day and night in the wonderful air. After various delays and a day journey over the plains in which "a few buffaloes were in sight . . . with antelopes and wolves," he wrote to his mother (August 29): "I think I have done the government and the country some service in this work. . . . I have had a hard trip but it has done me a great deal of good. I am in excellent health, much better than when I left home." The journey came to an end at Fort Leavenworth on September 7.

Three years later Garfield made his first and only trip to the Pacific coast, traveling with a party in which General Edward McCook, formerly of the Army of the Cumberland, was his only real acquaintance. Leaving Chicago on April 24, they went directly across the continent, reaching the terminus at Oakland on April 30. After two weeks' visiting in and about San Francisco, seeing the one great curiosity of the city, the Chinese quarter, the party visited the Yosemite Valley, May 12 to 22, experiencing the novelty of a spring snowstorm among the tremendous scenery of the region. After returning to San Francisco for more than a week, Garfield started eastward, visiting the silver mines and the mint at Virginia City and Carson City, Nevada; going thence to Lake Tahoe, after that to Salt Lake City

and finally back over the ground he had traversed in 1872 to Leavenworth.

Garfield's enjoyment of the trip was considerably hampered by an illness which finally turned out to be an intestinal ulcer. This disability laid him up for weeks after his return to the East and was cured only by an operation. But in spite of this handicap he managed to get a great deal out of it, and the incidents described in his home letters illustrate his unquenchable zest, even under trying circumstances. He studied what he saw with the same close and rapid attention that he had given to things in Europe, describing and commenting on the climate, the social peculiarities, the scenery and his fellow travelers. He devoted several letters to full descriptions of the Yosemite Valley, which he explored for a week with constantly rising enthusiasm; but he gave nearly as much space and fully as much interest to his inspection of the Nevada mines at the "Comstock lode."

One of the things which astounded him was the number of enormously rich men that he encountered. "It is said," he wrote to his wife (May 5), "that there are more than 200 millionaires in this city, and there are perhaps a dozen or twenty men who are worth from 20 to 40 millions each. They did not make their money slowly by those small methods which make men narrow and penurious; but they did it partly by great boldness in enterprise, and partly by the lucky accidents which attend a mining country. Hence they are generous and broad-minded. I find it necessary to brace myself against the inclination to rebel against the fate that placed me in such a narrow groove in reference to business and property." One of these millionaires, Mr. W. C. Ralston, who entertained him at his estate, Belmont, commanded Garfield's admiration and amazement for the boldness of his enterprises and the sense of power and success about him. "He is not yet fifty years old," he wrote, "was born near Mansfield, Ohio, and came here a poor boy in 1850. He has the reputation, and I should say justly, of being the most powerful business intellect on this coast. The amount of work he performs daily is something enormous. . . . I look

upon him as one of the very most remarkable men I have ever met."

From the many pages he wrote from the Yosemite, struggling to describe "this miracle of height and depth, of waters and rock and sky" (May 18), one cannot quote more than his description of the culminating moment when he climbed through deep snow to the top of Sentinal Dome and gazed down (May 20): "There ascended from the valley, 4500 feet below us, the deep solemn muffled bass of the many cataracts; and around us on all sides, were the grand, silent snow-crowned, sunlit mountains. It was more than Rigi, in its awful surroundings, only less than Rigi because you were not with me. In the midst of this immensity I felt the infinite littleness of man, when in the presence of God's mighty architecture. Slowly and in awed and hushed silence we descended the mountain, and welcomed its shadows that veiled such greatness from our sight."

After returning to San Francisco and being obliged to remain quiet a few days, he felt a sudden accession of restlessness and depression at being idle in the midst of busy men. But when he had started for the East and reached Virginia City with its mines among the desolate Nevada ranges his spirits rose. "June 1. I believe my nature was made for mountain life. The blues which infected my last letter have all [been] dissipated in this wonderful air, and the wheels of my intellect sing as they roll." He responded to the mines as vigorously as he had to the mountains, and after going down into the bowels of the earth to see the extraction of the silver-bearing ore, he wrote: "The energy, the great ability which are in active exhibition there every day is one of the marvels of our American life. This is the country made famous by Mark Twain in 'Roughing It.' Just across from my hotel was the newspaper office where he began his career as a writer." He planned constantly to return, bringing his family with him to see the sights he had so enjoyed.

If an almost perfect open-mindedness and fairness had come to characterize Garfield as an observer of places, men

and books, an equal liberality and candor marked him as a thinker. Of this many examples have already been given throughout the narrative of his Congressional career, but it would be wholly unfitting to pass over without mention the changes which maturity brought in the two chief fields of his earlier thinking. To consider first his ideas on education, it has been noted how the first change from a purely literary and philosophical conception of the subject came as a result of his studies preceding the debate with Denton. But it was his military and Congressional experience which completed the transformation, so that within a few years after ceasing to teach he realized that education, instead of being merely the unfolding of the individual soul in literary, metaphysical and religious thought, was the training of men and women for citizenship in a living scientific, industrial and political world. The fullest statement of his new creed was in an address entitled "College Education," given at the Hiram Commencement of 1867 before the Literary Societies, the occasion being the announcement of the incorporation of the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute as Hiram College. In setting up the curriculum for the new college, the trustees had introduced sundry novel features, and Garfield's address, while explaining and justifying them, was much more, —a manifesto setting forth his whole ideal of college education. As such it deserves attention for the boldness of its challenge to what at that time were the prevailing customs throughout the United States.¹

At the outset he brushed away the contention that "purely disciplinary" courses could exist. "It may be stated as a general rule," he remarked, "that if we compel ourselves to learn what we ought to know, and use it when learned, our discipline will take care of itself." He then laid down several distinct, although interrelated, fields for study, which he summed up thus: "In brief, the student should study himself, his relations to society, to nature, and to art; and above all, in all and through all these he should study the relation of himself, society, nature and art, to God, the

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 265.

Author of them all." He then tested the colleges by this standard and came to the conclusion that they failed lamentably and utterly in all but one. They did nothing to teach students about their own bodies—"the laws of life and physical well-being." In the matter of applied science they were equally remiss. "A finished education is supposed to consist mainly of literary culture. . . . This generation is beginning to understand that education should not be forever divorced from industry—that the highest results can be reached only when science guides the hand of labor." Pointing to the establishment of the land-grant institutions as a step in this direction, he concluded, "This great outlay would have been totally unnecessary but for the stupid and criminal neglect of college, academic and common-school boards of education to furnish that which the wants of the people require."

He then turned to a still graver defect. Why, he asked, was there such a lack of strong national feeling in 1860? "I do not hesitate to affirm that one of the chief causes was our defective system of education. . . . Our educational forces are so wielded as to teach our children to admire most that which is foreign and fabulous and dead. . . . For this defect of our educational system I have neither respect nor toleration. . . . It is well to know the history of those magnificent nations whose origin was lost in fable and whose epitaphs were written a thousand years ago; but if we cannot know both it is far better to study the history of our own nation, whose origin we can trace to the freest and noblest aspirations of the human heart. . . . One half of the time which is now almost wholly wasted in district schools on English grammar, attempted at too early an age, would be sufficient to teach our children to love the Republic, and to become its loyal and life-long supporters." He insisted that a knowledge of American history and government should be a condition of graduation in every American college.

The thing to do, he maintained, was to depose the old-fashioned classical subjects from their preëminence. "It costs me a struggle," he said, "to say anything on this sub-

ject which may be regarded with favor by those who would reject the classics altogether, for I have read them and taught them with a pleasure and relish which few other pursuits have ever afforded me; but I am persuaded that their supporters must soon submit to a re-adjustment of their relations to college study, or they may be driven from the course altogether." But he added that the great value of Latin and Greek was itself obscured by the pedantic importance attached to grammar, syntax and prosody, to the exclusion of the immortal literary monuments. He concluded by announcing that the Board of Trustees had voted not to require Classics after Freshman year but to replace them by other subjects. Yet, he observed, "this change does not reduce the amount of labor required of you. If it did I should deplore it."

The ideal laid down in this address was years ahead of its time; in fact, it has not yet been fully carried out by any institution. In some respects it would still be considered radical, sixty years after its enunciation. The conception of a school which should aim consciously to fit the student to live in the world which he must soon enter was still slowly making its way into educational thought forty years after Garfield was in his grave. Some of the ideas in this address he repeated on other occasions. On June 29, 1869, before the Spencerian Business College of Washington¹ he used language still more plain-spoken, declaring that he wished every college president could hear what he had to say. "Business colleges, my fellow-citizens, originated in the country as a protest against the insufficiency of our system of education, as a protest against the failure, the absolute failure of our American schools and colleges to fit young men and young women for the business of life. . . . The people are making a grave charge against our system of higher education. . . . It is a charge to which our colleges cannot plead guilty and live. They must rectify the fault or miserably fail of their purpose. . . . The fact is, that our curriculum of college studies was not based on modern ideas

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 317.

and has not grown up to our modern necessities. . . . The universities of Europe, from which our colleges were copied, were founded before the modern languages were born. . . . We now have strong and noble living languages, rich in literature, replete with high and earnest thought, the language of science, religion and liberty; and yet we bid our children feed their spirits on the life of dead ages, instead of the inspiring life and vigor of our own times. I do not object to classical learning—far from it; but I would not have it exclude the living present.”

Garfield’s ideal of the study of American history and government as a method of stimulating patriotism was one that did not come into general acceptance for two generations, but it was one that he had deeply at heart. As early as May 2, 1866, he expressed this very strongly in moving to add to the army appropriation schools “where all enlisted men may be provided with instruction in the common English branches of education and especially in the history of the United States. If it were in my power,” he said, “I would make it a law that every man and woman in the United States should study American history through the period of their minority. We cannot do that throughout the United States generally, but we can enforce it to some extent upon the privates in our army.”¹ According to Hinsdale nothing was done under this section until the Hayes administration, when the system was organized under a board of officers, and it was in active operation by 1881.

Again, writing in 1871 (November 27) to a correspondent who had asked his advice as to the propriety of establishing a chair of American History at Bethany College, where Garfield was a trustee, he said: “You could hardly have made a suggestion which would receive a more cordial approval from me. . . . It has for years been my decided opinion that our American Colleges were woefully lacking in proper attention to that class of subjects. Young men graduate from colleges with ample knowledge of the geography and history of Greece and Rome but utterly ignorant

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2350.

of the wonderful facts of our own country and its rise. It is perhaps the only great nation on the globe the origin of whose government can be traced from its first beginnings to the present time. The rarest lessons of political philosophy, of stirring pioneer life, of adventurous war, or daring explorations may be found on every page of our history and our young men should be filled with their spirit."

It is clear that the subject of American history, especially in the little-studied aspect of the expansion into the interior valley, appealed strongly to the descendant of one of the actual pioneers. A little later he took occasion to make a public demonstration of his interest in this field by preparing and delivering at Burton, on September 16, 1873, an address which was one of the earliest general surveys of the settlement of the interior, regarded as a nation-making movement. In it, after leading through the French and Revolutionary periods and the early explorations, he closed with an enthusiastic tribute to the pioneers of the Western Reserve, and an appeal for the study of their work in founding communities and setting up new institutions. What led him to undertake this survey was the interest he took in February, 1873, in aiding to secure an appropriation of \$10,000 for the purchase of the Margry manuscript copies of unprinted material from the French archives relating to the discovery of the interior.¹ It was this which stirred his imagination and set him to work, in what was then a field of history where little of a constructive character had been undertaken.

Most striking of all was the change produced in Garfield's religious life from the days of his intense absorption in the doings of the Disciples and his incessant preaching. Here, as in the case of his human relationships, it was the military experience that effected the transformation. One can trace the steps in his letters. For a while the pietistic phraseology persisted, as when he wrote to Austin (December 4, 1861): "I find it a great change in my life but I hope I am not losing sight of the great aim and hopes of the calm life of

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 70.

peace and the joys that crown it." But this presently vanished and with it "Bro. This and Sister That" disappeared from letters and journals. By 1866 he had so far departed from his own early habits as to be able to write the following warning to Hinsdale, then editing a Disciple Journal (April, 1866), "I hope you will not adopt the habit of calling everybody *Brother* in the *Standard*. It does no good and is rather repulsive to general readers."

In fact, he seems to have had during the war a sort of reaction against the social simplicity of his fellow Disciples. On December 7, 1862, he wrote to Rhodes: "I went to-day to the Disciple meeting at the house of Brother Campbell on Mass. Avenue. I spoke a short time but was annoyed by their constant references to their distinguished brother etc." This mood wore off and Garfield remained a steady attendant at the Disciples church in Hiram or in Washington, where he seems to have accepted the flutter caused by his distinguished presence as a matter of course.

In the following years one can trace, in Garfield's letters and journals, a steady and rapid growth in liberality and fairness of views toward all forms of religion, from the days when he first was ready to admit merit in the Episcopal form of worship, and even found something not wholly bad in Rosecrans's Catholicism. In 1868 he wrote the following statement of his position (S. A. Galbraith, August 5): "In answer to your inquiry I have to say that I am a member of the Disciple Church, sometimes called '*Campbellites*,' though we acknowledge no other name than Christians or Disciples of Christ. I have been a member of that church half my life, having made a profession of religion eighteen years ago. I try not to be a religious partisan and I call all men my brethren who acknowledge and follow Christ as the Son of God and the saviour of men."

In the next decade he had passed beyond this position and was ready to learn from Unitarians or even atheists. After reading *Ten Great Religions* by James Freeman Clarke, he wrote to Hinsdale (February 22, 1872): "It is admirably written in a liberal and philosophical spirit and I am sure it

will interest you. What I have read of it leads me to believe that we have taken too narrow a view of the subject of religion. The absolute truths of religion of course must be as old as the race and such books as this of Clarke's widen our horizon and make us more liberal." Most characteristic is Garfield's brief comment on Renan (October 17, 1875): "It is pleasant to read the views of a strong man with whom you disagree. He is sure to give you some valuable thoughts."

As soon as Garfield left the Disciple community of Hiram and ceased to be where he could easily transfer his energies from teaching to preaching, he definitely and rather suddenly abandoned the latter, although he had stuck to it up to the verge of enlisting. Regarding this change a full and clear statement is found in a letter of advice to Hinsdale of January 6, 1863. "The question you propose," he said, "in reference to preaching is one on which my own mind and heart have been severely tried and I most fully understand your feelings. . . . Let me state my own opinions. . . . Such is the state of the Disciple organization and doctrine that I cannot be a preacher and that only. It is too narrow a field for the growth and development that one feels he must have. No doubt this opinion will appear conceited and egotistical in the man who holds it, but I cannot help it. . . . It may be a good thing for you to develop your views on the matter in a discourse declaring your policy and determination which will in a measure relieve you from embarrassment. I contemplated such a work for myself but the intervention of the war postponed and possibly entirely removed the necessity of such a declaration." It appears that thereafter he never formally preached, although he occasionally offered "remarks" in meetings.

While Garfield's interest in things religious was during these years increasingly liberal, his toleration for poor sermons was almost at an end. His journal, kindly in first judgments and amazingly generous in its attitude toward opponents, contains a great many amusing illustrations of his impatience along this line. "Jan. 7, 1872 At Church with the family. The sermon was an attempt to draw a mathe-

matical line across the world with Hell-bound on one side and Heaven-bound on the other. The issues of life and death and the exact scope of moral worth cannot be mapped out like counties." July 6, at Hiram: "I was tortured by the feeblest little preacher it has been my misfortune to hear for many months. It is a fraud on the community and a wrong to the young man. I presume he is the victim of a foolishly fond mother and the still more foolish zeal of Christian friends who think that the only conclusive evidence of piety is an attempt to preach. The sermon was not a landscape, not even so diversified as a prairie. It was a flat soggy bog in which the preacher was too feeble to flounder."

On September 22, 1878, he wrote to his wife: "I have this morning attended the Presbyterian church and listened to a goodish feeble sermon. Without much distinction of creed, the modern sermons seem nearly all alike. To preach that way all one's life must be a dreary business. We pity ourselves as hearers. What pity ought we not to feel for the preacher! Are we all in the grip of a system which necessarily leads to such results? Or has it been perverted until all the life of it is lost, so that we feed on the dead husks while the fruit is lost? My darling radical, you must help me solve this mystery."

On the other hand, when Garfield heard a sermon that he liked he was just as hearty in his praise. He enjoyed listening to Hinsdale and always speaks of his sermons as "very solid" (September 29, 1872) or some similar adjective. On December 19, 1875, he went to hear Moody and Sankey, saying of the former: "Moody seems to be very far from a great thinker or great speaker but there is a wonderful directness and earnestness in all he says. He drives straight towards his object without delay and reaches the hearts and wills of people in a wonderful degree. . . . It shows by contrast the powerlessness of modern theological training as compared with a direct address to hearts and consciences of men." Two months later he expressed still greater satisfaction over a very different sort of preacher. "Feb. 29, 1876. C. and I went to the Unitarian church and

heard a very interesting sermon by Freeman Clarke of Boston. Subject 'The letter killeth but the spirit maketh alive.' I have not been so much instructed by a sermon in a long time. It was so free from cant and hypercriticism and was full of instruction."

Yet Garfield continued steadily to be a member of the Disciples church and usually attended one wherever he happened to be. When on a stumping tour in Maine he entered this in his journal (September 1, 1878): "At three p.m. went to 62 Gray street, a private residence, where 30 Disciples were met, to break the loaf. It seemed like the days of my very early life. They had no preacher, but each bore a part in mutual encouragement. I spoke two or three minutes, enough to excuse the intrusion of a stranger."

It may be asked whether this interest in so many different topics does not indicate something merely acquisitive on Garfield's part. Writers not infrequently make this qualification. J. F. Rhodes¹ speaks of his "broad though superficial intelligence"; and Donn Piatt² wrote, "Without being either deep or original, Garfield had a most suggestive mind." It may be admitted at once that Garfield was not primarily a constructive thinker. It was not his habit to attempt prolonged and exhaustive following of one line of thought; nor did he find pleasure in framing a hypothesis and then testing it to the uttermost. His nature and training, first as teacher and then as Congressman and orator, led him to take the rôle of an expositor rather than a creator. But within the field to which, by his fate and his temper, he was limited, his mind reacted strongly upon the material he studied, so that the speeches or conversations in which he set forth his thoughts are alive with suggestive ideas. If one misses the closely knit, laborious logic of a mind working its way through a problem, regardless of the effect of the utterance that marks the creative mind of the first order, one constantly perceives the skill and fertility of the man who is accustomed to think on his feet and to address himself to an audience.

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 138.

² *Life of Gen. Geo. H. Thomas*, p. 331.

Blaine made an interesting observation on this point. "The apparently reserved force," he said,¹ "which Garfield possessed was one of his great characteristics. He never did so well but that it seemed he could easily have done better. He never expended so much strength but that he appeared to be holding additional power at call. This is one of the happiest and rarest distinctions of an effective debater; and often counts for as much in persuading an assembly as the eloquent and elaborate argument."

Most of his acquaintances had no hesitation in regarding his many-sidedness as a genuine versatility. Hayes, for instance, wrote in his journal:² "If he were not in public life he would be equally eminent as a professor in a college, as a lecturer, as an author, an essayist, or a metaphysician." Hoar put it still more strongly.³ "We have no other example in our public life of such marvellous completeness of intellectual development. He exhibited enough of his varied capacity to make it sure that he could have attained greatness as a metaphysician, or a mathematician, in any of the exact sciences, as a linguist, as an executive officer, as he did in fact attain it as a military commander, as an orator, as a debater, and a parliamentary and popular leader."

¹ "Eulogy," p. 25.

² Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 239.

³ *Autobiography*, Vol. II, p. 17.

CHAPTER XXI

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ONE of Garfield's many interests played so important a part in his life as to deserve a special handling. This was the profound interest in education and in science which he carried with him as the result of his ten years' experience as student and as teacher at Hiram and at Williams. As Hinsdale said:¹ "No doubt he would have taken a strong interest in public education had he never taught, but his experience as a teacher greatly widened and deepened his interest. . . . He was always keenly alive to politics and to party politics; but never, even in the most exciting times, did he lose his interest in the progress of knowledge and the education of the people. . . . The great interest that Garfield always took in education, even after he ceased to teach and grew to influence as a statesman, is well known to those who have only a general acquaintance with his life. Still the extent of his interest, and the value of his contributions to educational discussions and literature is known to very few."

If the largest field of his activity be considered first, that of his Congressional efforts in behalf of education and scientific progress, it is to be noted that Garfield held definite views as to the constitutional powers of Congress which imposed strict limits upon him. As his arguments in the Milligan case in 1866 and his speeches on Reconstruction and particularly on the Ku Klux act of 1871 showed, he was wholly unwilling to advocate anything that called for an extension of the powers of the federal government into spheres of action that properly belonged to the states. While in no sense a "States' right" man, he had a strong belief in the importance of individual initiative in all fields of education and science, and this, he felt, was best preserved by

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 70.

jealously abstaining from anything that resembled governmental control.

His first conspicuous action came when, in the session of 1865-1866, in the midst of the exciting reconstruction contest and during his own efforts on the Committee of Ways and Means to carry the tax and tariff bills, he introduced for a group of educational thinkers a bill to establish a federal "Department of Education." As chairman of a select committee, with a widely distributed membership, he reported the bill to the house on April 3, largely redrafted by himself, in the form of provisions for a Commissioner of Education, with appropriate clerical force, whose duties should be primarily the collection and dissemination of educational information among the states, and secondarily, sundry functions in connection with the "land-grant colleges" and with schools in the District of Columbia.

When the bill came up in the House on June 8,¹ Garfield left the advocacy of the measure to his colleagues and did not speak until the time came to close, when, through a misunderstanding of the rules, he found himself with a bare half hour. In that time he spoke energetically on the need of a strong movement for general education. "Sir," he said, "I will not trouble the House by repeating common-places so familiar to every gentleman here, as that our system of government is based upon the intelligence of the people. But I wish to suggest to the House this thought, that there never has been a time in the history of our country when all the educational forces ought to be in such perfect activity as at the present day." To prove this he pointed to the statistics of illiteracy, to the numbers of immigrants. "One third of a million of people are being annually thrown upon our shores from the Old World, and the gloomy total has been swelled by the 4,000,000 slaves admitted to citizenship by the events of the war. Such, sir, is the immense force which we must now confront by the genius of our institutions and the light of our civilization. . . . Does not this question rise to the full height of national importance and

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3049.

demand the best efforts of statesmanship to adjust it?" To repel the charge of extravagance he mentioned all the scientific and engineering enterprises to which the government contributed "to exhibit the material resources of physical nature." "Will you refuse the pitiful sum required to collect and record the intellectual resources of the country?" He pointed out that three-quarters of a million had been appropriated for surveys for a Pacific railroad "and now, when it is proposed to appropriate \$13,000 to aid in increasing the intelligence of those who will use that great continental highway . . . we are reminded of our debts and warned against increasing our expenditures. It is difficult to treat such an objection with the respect that is always due in this hall of legislation."

Dwelling with care and precision upon the fact that this Department was not intended to establish any control over the actual teaching, he explained the publicity value of a general annual survey of the schools in different states such as the reports of the department would furnish, and concluded by calling attention to the educational efforts of two states as examples to emulate, his own state, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, which, under the leadership of Thaddeus Stevens, established and maintained a general public school system. Cut off by the expiration of his time from saying more, he later added further illustrative matter and many quotations and the speech as published in his *Works* is considerably longer and more ornate than the one actually delivered. He was still in his earlier oratorical manner, composed with an eye to "elegance."¹

In spite of what Garfield and his colleagues were able to say, the bill was beaten by two votes, 59 to 61, the Democrats voting almost solidly against it. But later in the day, while Blaine held the floor on a private bill, he yielded to Upson of Michigan to move a reconsideration, and on June 19 this motion came to a vote. This time no speeches were made, but Garfield took occasion to remark: "We ask the passage of this bill . . . at the earnest request of the school

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 126.

commissioners of several states. It is an interest that has no lobby to press its claims. It is the voice of the children of the land, asking us to give them all the blessings of civilization. I hope that the instinct which has moved the other side of the House to vote solidly against this liberal and progressive measure will at least induce this side to save it from defeat. I will not take the time of the House to discuss it, but will trust to the sense of duty among the liberal men of the House and to the manifest justice of the bill.”¹ This time it passed 80 to 44. A number who had opposed it the first time—such as Blaine—now abstained from voting, a few changed, and a considerable number who had not voted at first now lined up for the bill.

The explanation of this shift in the vote was given in a debate in the following Congress, February 12, 1868, on the department.² “This gentleman’s bill,” said E. B. Washburne, “after being once defeated in the House was, by dint of his persuasion and eloquence finally reconsidered and foisted upon the country.” Pike of Maine, who had savagely opposed it as a useless expense, added, “By dint of personal entreaty the bill was carried through the House and that is the way it happened to become law.” Blaine also regretfully admitted his share in the transaction. “I was myself,” he said, “among the noes but at a subsequent part of the same day, having the floor on another question, I was good natured enough, or weak enough at the request of my persuasive friend from Ohio [Mr. Garfield], to yield the floor to my friend from Michigan [Mr. Upson] to move a reconsideration.” Evidently Garfield’s personal work with Upson, Blaine and others made it possible for the bill to be passed at the second trial.

The bill went through the Senate at the next session and became law in 1867, but Garfield’s labors for the Department were by no means over. The first commissioner under the act, John Barnard, an elderly man, had long been a prominent writer on educational matters and had edited the

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3270.

² *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1141.

Journal of Education. Attacking his problem with deliberation and thoroughness, he laid out a program of such scope that it was not until the summer of 1868 that he was able to complete his first report. Meanwhile the Fortieth Congress had shown a strong desire to undo the work of the preceding one and abolish the new Department. The Committee on Appropriations omitted any provision for it in the annual bill, and when, on February 12, Garfield made a strong appeal to have it restored, he was met with the charge that he had bamboozled the preceding House into passing a worthless bill, providing a sinecure for an old man who was doing nothing.

Garfield evaded discussion of the charge against himself and argued earnestly in defense of Barnard. "Common justice," he said, "requires us to receive his report and examine his work before we condemn both him and the Department." Again and again he answered the charge that the act was an encroachment on the rights of the state. "No authority whatever," he said, "was given in the law to control the subject of education in the states. . . . The Department was established for the purpose of collecting statistics and publishing them to the country in aid of the educational movements of the states. . . . The bill establishing the Department has been noticed in all the nations and languages of Europe as a step in the direction which nations must take to secure the liberty of the people and the safety of the Government." He closed by appealing to the House not to destroy it unheard,¹ but on February 18 his amendment was defeated 61 to 40.

Garfield was now becoming seriously alarmed at the prospect of failure, and he wrote to Barnard the following plain-spoken letter (May 5, 1868): "My great interest in the permanence and success of the Department of Education induces me to suggest to you my fear that nothing but an early presentation to Congress of the valuable reports which you have so nearly ready, will enable the friends of the Department to save it from abolition and to defend you from

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1141.

the charge that is constantly being reiterated that no good to the nation is being accomplished by the Department and that you are using the office in the interest of your Journal. Unless we can get an appropriation through Congress this session . . . it will be virtually abolished."

Spurred by this, Barnard managed to present part of what he had collected as a preliminary report, on May 30, but this failed to help the situation, since it consisted mainly of an elaborate skeleton outline of what he intended to do. When the bill came back from the Senate the appropriation had been inserted, but the House committee unhesitatingly recommended nonconcurrence. On July 2 Garfield made another strong plea for the existence of the department, reading a letter from John Bright applauding its establishment and describing another from a candidate for school commissioner in a reconstructed state, "begging that this department of education may give his state all possible aid and counsel in organizing a system of common schools."¹ But his efforts were in vain. The savage attacks upon the department led by such prominent Republicans as Washburne and Stevens and continual slurs upon the "worn-out old man" who had been placed at its head, led the House to reject the appropriation once more. The Senate still insisting, a compromise was arranged by which the commissioner was retained as an officer in the Interior Department while his separate establishment, including clerks, was abolished. So much was saved from the wreck.

After the session Garfield wrote to E. E. White of Columbus (July 26, 1868): "Our department of Education has escaped destruction only by a hair's breadth. Barnard is utterly destitute of administrative ability and has made the impression on Congress that his faults are far worse than that." Before the next Congress met, Barnard's report had appeared, a monumental affair in two huge volumes, which, according to Garfield, was calculated to complete the damage caused by his delay. He freed his mind to Hinsdale in a letter of January 27, 1869. "While it contains much ex-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., p. 3705.

ceedingly valuable matter . . . the mistake of the commissioner was in not understanding that he was serving under a body of men who were not educated in his line and who had given a reluctant consent to the establishment of the Dept. and in order to secure their consent for its continued existence must see something of direct value in it. Instead of that he laid out a scheme so vast as to make it impossible to realize its object without tons of reports, he opened up themes entirely beyond the reach of what we call public education, and worse than all, he quoted so much in the way of matter and indexes from his *Journal of Education* as to subject himself to the suspicion of using office to advertise his periodical. Against my protest he inserted my speech, which made it nearly impossible for me to defend his report in the House. He utterly missed the point of proving to Congress that his Dept. was a good thing, though to a scholar and educator his Report will always be a most valuable summary of important material."

With the replacement of Barnard by a new man, John Eaton, under Grant, Garfield hoped for a more politic management of the Bureau, but still had to fight for it in the session of 1869-1870, always under the handicap of Barnard's unwise reprinting of his speech of 1866, which was invariably thrown up at him in debate. On this occasion he first interposed (February 2) after Farnsworth of Illinois had denounced the wastefulness of printing a "big book of statistics." Garfield remarked that since his Census Bill had failed, the educational statistics, if taken at all, would have to be authorized in this way. Farnsworth retorted: "Mr. Chairman, the trouble with the gentleman from Ohio seems to be that he has gone mad on the subject of statistics. . . . Perhaps if the commissioner of Education had taken the same pains to circulate my speeches as he has taken to circulate the speeches of the gentleman from Ohio . . . I might be in favor of continuing this department."¹ In spite of his sarcasms the appropriation was not struck out, and the Senate, after further debate, concurred.

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1492.

This seemed to be the turning-point in the contest. Garfield wrote to the commissioner, John Eaton, on May 16, 1870: "I congratulate you on the successful struggle in the Senate for the preservation of the Bureau of Education and I hope we have seen the hardest fight against it. Ever since I secured the passage of the first bill we have had to struggle for the life of the department. . . . I have no doubt that its ultimate fate will depend wholly upon the success of this year's work. I look to you with great confidence and hope the wisdom of the law will be vindicated." In the short session of 1870-1871, the Bureau again came under debate (January 13), and Beck of Kentucky sneered that the Bureau "simply circulated the gentleman's speech," but the tide had turned, so that Garfield could ignore his taunt and say to the House:¹ "I am sure every friend of education in this country will be glad to know that the struggle which we have had here for so many years is now really over. I believe nobody proposes to abolish it. I think the action of the House last year settled that question." S. S. Cox retorted, "I simply wish to say that I propose to abolish it." But when Cox's amendment came to a vote he was overwhelmed, "ayes thirty seven, noes not counted."

The reason for this great change in sentiment was mentioned by Garfield in a letter of January 18, 1871, to E. E. White: "We have at last conquered in the first stage of the fight in favor of national recognition of education. Only a small vote can now be mustered for abolishing the Bureau and we shall be able to increase the Appropriation a little each year, I think, but a new question confronts us and for its solution all the wisdom of our best educators is needed. The Bureau receives the enthusiastic support of nearly all the Southern members, but I suspect that their support is largely based on their expectations of heavy appropriations to the South for the support of schools in some form."

In the stormy session of 1872-1873, when he was struggling with a recalcitrant House in the midst of the *Crédit Mobilier* tempest, he once more came to the defense of the

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., p. 491.

Bureau against Sargent of California and the still unconciled Farnsworth. On January 8, after the latter had made his usual attack, Garfield commented, "I am amazed when I hear the gentleman from Illinois as I have heard him now for the fifth or sixth year since this bureau was founded, talking as a savage of the wilderness might have talked when he saw the white pioneers erecting their first schoolhouse." Farnsworth retorted that "the speech of the gentleman from Ohio is altogether too lofty and ethereal for my comprehension" and added the inevitable taunt: "The Bureau of Education and my friend from Ohio are a mutual admiration society. One lauds the Bureau here on the floor of the House and the other publishes the member's speech in its report." But the House, unmoved, voted the appropriation.¹ Garfield was not again called upon to speak for it.

This act was Garfield's chief contribution to the educational organization of the country, but in connection with several other bills he took occasion to express views which deserve notice. In the session of 1869-1870 (June 21), for example, he spoke strongly in favor of appropriations for the School for the Deaf and Dumb in the District of Columbia, pointing out what an important function it had assumed in furnishing to all the states a supply of trained teachers of these unfortunate defectives.² It was virtually a "normal college." A little earlier Garfield brought forward from the Committee on Military Affairs, December 10, 1868, a bill drafted with General Grant's approval to provide for military instruction in colleges, with a view to furnishing a widespread basis for recruiting army officers. The plan had interesting possibilities and bore a considerable resemblance to the Reserve Officers' Training Corps actually established about fifty years later, but it had no chance of passing in 1868, combining as it did two things equally obnoxious to this Congress—a federal connection with state institutions and a strengthening of the hated regular army. It was not

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., p. 470.

² *Ibid.*, 2 sess., p. 4682.

even debated, but was killed by being laid at once on the table, 66 to 46.

The Bureau of Education had no sooner gained its acceptance than a far more extensive project was brought up, to which Garfield, under the sway of his constitutional beliefs, was unable to give his support until it was modified to suit his views. The proposal was to establish national support of education in the Southern states. Writing to a friend, Garfield said (February 8, 1871): "We are just now in the midst of a debate on a bill introduced by the Committee on Education and Labor, to establish a National System of Education under the control of the General Government. I send you a *Globe* containing a valuable speech by Mr. Hoar who is a most worthy man, and it pains me to be compelled to differ from him on the educational question. But after careful consideration of the case I have determined to oppose the bill. The Genius of our Government, of the spirit of our people requires that the spirit of voluntary effort shall not be repressed and especially that centralism shall not be applied to our educational processes. I admit, however, that to determine what we should do with a State that shamefully neglects the education of its children is a most difficult problem. Possibly we may, ultimately, be compelled to adopt Mr. Hoar's plan but I would consent only as a last resort."

The next year a bill for the support of national education came before the House in such form that Garfield could give it his support. Instead of actually trying to set up a national system, it provided that the proceeds from the sale of public lands were to constitute a fund to be turned over to aid states that were in need of it. Garfield secured the floor on February 6 for a ten-minute speech in which he amplified and extended what he had already said about the relation of the federal government to education. After pointing out that the sum to be granted was about 1 per cent of the total revenues of the United States he said:¹ "The gift is not great, but yet in one view of the case it is

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 859.

princely. To dedicate for the future a fund which is now one per cent of the revenues of the United States to the cause of education is to my mind a great thought, and I am glad to give it my endorsement. . . . This country will remember the man who formulated it into language and will remember the Congress that made it law." He then turned to the method. "How is this great gift to be distributed? We propose to give it, Mr. Speaker, through our American system of education; and in giving it we do not propose to mar in the least degree the harmony and beauty of that system. If we did, I should be compelled to give my voice and vote against the measure. . . . On this question I have been compelled heretofore to differ with many friends of education here and elsewhere, many who have thought it might be wise for Congress in certain contingencies to take charge of the system of education in the states. I will not now discuss the constitutional aspect of that question, but I desire to say that all the philosophy of our educational system forbids that we should take such a course. And in the few minutes awarded to me, I wish to make an appeal for our system as a whole against any other known to me."

Garfield then gave in admirably condensed form the forces making for American education, enumerating the state and municipal governments first, and voluntary enterprise second. To emphasize the idea that the conservation of these two sources of strength was the first object of statesmanship, he quoted fully from Matthew Arnold's celebrated report on education made in 1868, which laid down the dictum that "the public school for the people must rest on the municipal organization of the country," and that of C. Hippau, who had presented to the French government in 1870 a report on public education in the United States. What had impressed the French observer most powerfully was the immense activity of private initiative, and he had urged with brilliancy and eloquence the imitation of American ideals by the French Empire.

In all this there was reflected in Garfield's ideas the influence of his own early education and his own experience at

Hiram and, to a less degree, at Williams. It shone forth, particularly, when, toward the end of his speech, in a few sentences he summed up his whole ideal of the self-directed, voluntary character of all real education. "This work of public education partakes," he said, "in a peculiar way of the spirit of the human mind in its efforts for culture. The mind must be as free from extraneous control as possible, must work under the inspiration of its own desires for knowledge; and while instructions and books are necessary helps, the fullest and highest success must spring from the power of self-help."¹

This speech attracted some notice outside the hall. Writing to White, March 7, 1872, to thank him for a letter, Garfield added: "I am receiving many favorable notices of the views I take on that subject. The Superintendent of Education for the State of Rhode Island has ordered a thousand copies for distribution in his State," and he enclosed an editorial from the New York *World*. Garfield felt no conceit regarding this speech. Answering a congratulatory letter of Parke Godwin he said (March 30): "I have felt a deep anxiety in view of the manifest tendency on the part of many of our public men, in the direction of centralized authority, and nothing, it seems to me, could be more dangerous, than the assumption of power on the part of Congress of the control of education in the states. There is no midway ground between an abstract assertion of that right, and the assumption of power to dictate text-books, schoolhouses, teachers and every minutiae of the work of education. The opinions I cited in the speech were of the highest importance. My part of the speech is of little consequence compared with the authorities referred to."

In this same winter Garfield snatched a brief time from his duties with the appropriation bills to write for the visiting Japanese scholar, Arinori Mori, a letter on the functions of popular education in a state (February 29). He began, after assuring him of his deep interest in the future development of Japan and his hopes for harmonious co-

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 2 sess., p. 860.

operation with the United States, by a long exordium laying down and amplifying the principles upon which he said the whole of western civilization was based. "The Nations of Western Europe and of America," he said, "have evolved out of many conflicts, two principles which they now regard as the foundations of all national prosperity and glory. These are *First* Universal Education: *Second* The maintenance of personal, social and public morality." He then dwelt at length upon the social advantages of education and science, coming finally to the influence of education upon laws and government. Apparently many of his arguments were aimed at the supposedly despotic government of the Mikado. After quoting Guizot, Washington and J. Q. Adams he summed up: "Rulers must choose two conditions. Without education, the citizens of a nation will be ignorant, indolent, vicious and turbulent. With education they will become more and more enlightened, industrious, virtuous and peaceable. If the doctrines herein advocated be not true, all the systems of government and civilization which prevail in this country and in Western Europe have been founded on a fatal mistake. On that question, however, I entertain no doubt. I cannot doubt that the increase of general education and the knowledge of modern arts and sciences in your country will produce the same beneficent results which have been experienced by all the Western Nations."

In the next session of Congress a somewhat different education bill came from the Senate, which aimed to use the proceeds of the sale of public lands for a fund to aid agricultural colleges. Garfield showed on this occasion a certain scepticism as to the practical working of the plan. After discussing the bill with President White of Cornell and others connected with the so-called "Land-Grant colleges," he wrote in his journal (February 1, 1873): "I do not believe in a college to educate men for the profession of farming. A liberal education almost always draws men away from farming. But schools of science in general technology are valuable. I am in some doubt what ought to be done with this bill. They desire me to take charge of it in the House." He appears to have declined, for when the bill came up it

was in charge of a Mississippi representative. Garfield voted for it, on two occasions, in spite of his doubts, but the bill did not pass. When in 1873-1874 Hoar again brought up his education bill Garfield took no part in the discussion.

In the same way that he supported educational projects Garfield threw all his influence in favor of measures for aiding in scientific progress. As early as 1865 he was appointed a regent of the Smithsonian Institution, under the terms of the bequest, and was several times reappointed, in 1868, 1870, 1872, 1878 and 1879. "He is on record," says Hinsdale, "as having attended ten different meetings of the Board in as many different years." From this time onward, whenever there was any question of maintaining or enlarging appropriations for any of the scientific enterprises, Garfield could always be counted on to lend support by vote and by speech, unless buried in committee work. On some of these occasions he uttered brief arguments or expositions of the need for supporting scientific research which are worth recording.

On March 1, 1869, when a special appropriation was under consideration for preserving the collections of exploring and surveying parties of the Smithsonian, Garfield made a short speech¹ advocating the payment by the government of the running expenses of the Museum. "It is not a mere statistical establishment," he said, "as many may suppose, supporting a corps of men whose only duty is the exhibition of the articles of a show museum; but a living, active organization, that has, by its publications, researches, explorations, distribution of specimens and exchanges, vindicated the intelligence and good faith of the government in administering a fund intended for the good of the whole community of civilized men." Spaulding of Ohio retorted that the Smithsonian, like every other Washington establishment, was a "daughter of the horse-leech" and Garfield's proposal was defeated.

On March 22 Garfield assisted in an effort to secure the printing of the Medical and Surgical History of the Rebel-

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 430.

lion by appealing to the patriotism and pride of his hearers.¹ "I desire to say that in the annals of medical history there is not anything more creditable to a nation than the record of our medical operations during the war," he began; and he went on to show by statistics the vastly better record of American surgery in the Civil War than either British or French in the Crimean. He quoted largely from a report of the Surgical Society of Paris praising the American army at the expense of the French medical administration, and concluded, "Now, Mr. Speaker, I desire to say that, when our nation occupies so proud a position—when we have in our hands the most priceless materials that the history of science has ever afforded on this subject—it seems to me a small business for us to chaffer about the matter of a few hundred dollars of expense."

In the same way he gave help to the naval observatory, with whose director, Simon Newcomb, he became very friendly. In 1872, for instance, he undertook to carry a bill to make preparations for observing the transit of Venus, and asked unanimous consent on April 10. Holman was on the watch and immediately said, "I think Venus can get along without further legislation; I object." When the miscellaneous appropriation bill was brought up, Hoar moved the inclusion of the clause, and Holman was caught napping, for it went through unopposed. But the next year, when \$100,000 was asked in the "Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill" to fit out naval vessels for the expedition, Holman moved to strike it out as a proposition "to give lucrative employment to certain elegant gentlemen of leisure who think they have a god-given right to live on the labor of other people. . . . The movements of that goddess among the heavenly bodies are well enough for curious and speculative inquiry but you have no right to tax the people for any such purpose." Garfield dryly remarked that "we heard the same speech and the same joke last year," and after brief debate Holman was beaten 30 to 65.

Garfield's journal shows that he took pains to learn in

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1827.

advance precisely why the astronomers considered the transit of such importance, in order that he might speak intelligently in the House. "March 30, 1872. Read up on the transit of Venus." "April 3. Had Judge Black and Professor Newcomb at dinner and discussed until a late hour the 'Transit of Venus' and its value to science."

More ambitious in its scope and scientific objective than anything hitherto mentioned was an effort made by Garfield in 1869 to transform the United States Census from a routine enumeration into a thoroughly comprehensive collection of the economic and social statistics of the country. Though his attempt resulted in failure, it was not without influence upon later censuses and as an illustration of his ideals it deserves somewhat extended notice. He brought his bill before the House in the spring session of Congress, April 6, 1869, accompanying it with a speech¹ which showed his earnest desire to make the census serve as a basis for future legislation. In the opening paragraphs he once more laid down the doctrine he had already advocated in connection with the tariff and currency, the absolute necessity for a basis of accurate knowledge before legislation could be wisely attempted. "All the social and political forces of a nation must be examined with the same care that the man of science studies nature [with] before we can frame wise and salutary laws for the government of the people." And again: "When we propose to legislate for great masses of people, we must first study the great facts relating to the people; their number, strength, length of life, intelligence, morality, occupations, industry and wealth, for out of these spring the glory or the shame, the prosperity or the ruin of a nation." In short, Garfield advocated before his colleagues the constant use of reliable statistics as the basis for legislation. "This is the age of statistics, Mr. Speaker," he remarked.²

Perhaps his hearers might have been willing to admit possible uses in statistics, although many, like Kelley, repu-

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 443.

² *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 1 sess., p. 551.

diated them if they conflicted with preconceived ideas; but when Garfield went on to suggest a scientific way of collecting these statistics he ran into a dangerous region. After showing that the collection of census figures by marshals and deputies was inefficient because the marshals were, "as a rule, appointed on political grounds . . . with no special statistical knowledge," he sketched an organization under a census bureau, with an assistant superintendent in each Congressional district and special enumerators under him. This would enable all the statistics to be collected within one month instead of straggling through a whole year.

No sooner had Garfield finished his speech than signs of opposition appeared. The real crux of the matter lay in the proposal to set up new offices and the question whether these should be treated as Congressional spoils. One representative, Woodward of Pennsylvania, announced that unless he were permitted to offer an amendment putting the nomination of the proposed district superintendents in the hands of Congressmen he would vote to postpone the bill to the autumn.¹ After a number of alterations had been voted, Garfield evidently thought it wise to avoid a contest by accepting a far-reaching amendment offered by Jenkes, which substituted for the bill the appointment of a special committee which should, during the summer recess, prepare a bill to be submitted at the next session. This passed the House, 81 to 29.

Shortly after the end of the session Garfield, as chairman, returned to Washington in order to carry out his ideal of preparing a thoroughly modern census bill. He labored constantly from the end of May until the middle of July, writing scores of letters to persons of all sorts, asking for suggestions in regard to schedules and subjects. Some of his letters deserve quotation to show with what intensity and thoroughness he worked. June 9 (to his wife): "The census work has grown to enormous proportions. The Committee works in the Committee room from four to five hours a day, and we have hardly encompassed the field by a furrow, and

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 1 sess., p. 553.

yet the whole must be ploughed and planted. I have never undertaken so Herculean a task." June 16 (to Reid): "The work of preparing properly classified schedules for the next census is absolutely enormous. The great advance which has been made in the science of statistics in modern nations makes it necessary to go over a large field of investigation in order to bring our Census up to the latest standards of excellence." June 16 (to his wife): "In the committee today we had Dr. Snow of Rhode Island before us. He is an able practical statistician and his testimony is valuable. . . . I am quite sure the country will never appreciate the work we are doing." He consulted with "learned societies," with all sorts of experts, notably D. A. Wells, and went on to Boston to see C. F. Adams, Jr., on railroads. As a result of these hard-driving weeks he was able to make a draft for a bill by the latter part of July.

When Congress met, in December, 1869, Garfield made an attempt to hurry through the bill he had drawn, hoping to get it out of the way before any contentious legislation should appear. Warned by his experience the previous spring, he had taken pains to meet in advance all possible criticisms. In this task he took solid satisfaction, for it was scientific and wholly nonpartisan; but he remembered none the less the wholly unscientific point of view of most Congressmen. "The bill falls far short of what I could desire," he wrote to Dr. Jarvis (December 9), "very far short of what you wished, but the constant danger of overloading it by attempting too much prevented us from enlarging its scope. I shall try to get in a provision either now or hereafter that will enable the Secretary of the Interior to employ experts to work up the results."¹

The speech with which Garfield introduced and explained the bill, showing why special enumerators were recommended, and why each separate class of items was included, was a model of plain, clear and conciliatory exposition. Especially noteworthy were the provisions for including financial, economic and social data. In this connection he

¹ House Reports No. 3, 41 Cong., 2 sess.

remarked, after describing the plan for collecting statistics on transportation: "I am disposed to believe, Mr. Chairman, now that slavery is dead, that the next great fight in this country will be against corporations. And I believe it is high time, not perhaps to inaugurate that conflict, but to inquire of these great corporations that have to do with the transportation of this country, that hold in their hands almost the whole trade of the nation, to tell us what they are doing with the national wealth that is in their hands."¹

In discussing such a measure Garfield was emphatically in his element, for it dealt with wholly impersonal material, unconnected with partisan politics. So successful was he in meeting and satisfying the criticisms of "practical" members who could see no value in statistics unconnected with business, that on December 16 the bill was passed 86 to 40. Garfield wrote with evident satisfaction to Hinsdale: "After an eight days' struggle the Census Bill has at last passed the House. . . . I have known few bills since I have been in Congress to stand so searching and continuous an examination as this."

But the action of the Senate dashed these high hopes. The bill was referred to a committee headed by Conkling of New York, a man with whom "practical politics" were the first consideration and scientific progress wholly secondary if not negligible. To Garfield's great disgust the Senate committee dropped his bill and reported one that abandoned all pretense at statistical completeness, the reason being solely one of patronage, *i.e.*, of spoils politics. "A desire to retain the Marshals (as enumerators) and thus retain the patronage in their hands seems to be the motive with many Senators," he wrote to Hall (January 25). "A bill has been reported which, if it prevails will give us the old law without any of the improvements of the new bill. I still hope we may not be thus trifled with but it looks very much as though we should." Later he said: "Our census bill in the picturesque language of Fisk, has gone where the woodbine twineth. . . . Its failure was due to the hostility of one or two sena-

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 452.

tors and the negligence and inattention of the rest." Thus a whole summer's work was rendered fruitless and the effort to enact an enlightened census law blocked. The Senate was not to be moved and ultimately had its way. The census had to be taken under the antiquated schedules.

In geological and other scientific explorations Garfield took unfailing interest. In 1868, by reading letters from General Grant and Professor Henry of the Smithsonian, he carried through the House a bill authorizing the War Department to furnish supplies to the famous expedition of Major Powell down the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. In the appropriation bills he steadily supported the objects of the various surveys and investigations then being carried on. In all this, however, he adhered to the same principles which he had enunciated in connection with the Hoar educational bill, as was particularly well shown when, on February 11, 1879, he spoke in favor of a proposal to consolidate the various scientific surveys.

He began by drawing a distinction between the research which the government might properly undertake, and that which it ought to leave to private initiative. "Wherever," he said, "in exercising any of the necessary functions of the government, scientific inquiry is needed, let us make it to the fullest extent and at the public expense." He also recognized the need of federal action where the problem involved something outside state jurisdiction, or was interstate in character, such as the Mississippi River Commission or Yellow Fever Commission. "Otherwise," he said, "the desire of our scientific men is to be let alone, to work in free competition with all the scientific men of the world; to develop their own results, and get the credit of them each for himself."¹ Turning to the geological surveys he questioned whether the government had not overdone the matter by multiplying so many independent enterprises. Therefore, while supporting the value of the geological work, he concluded that it was time "first to restrict our scientific work plainly and narrowly within the limits of the rules I have tried to lay down;

¹ *Cong. Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1210.

and second, to consolidate the scientific part of our work of survey under one responsible head, and, having done that, let us make our outlay only in the direction of public necessity."

Garfield's last speech in the House, May 25, 1880, was in defense of an appropriation for the Coast and Geodetic Survey, which had been criticised by Blount of Georgia as useless. After describing clearly what it was doing to establish accurately the boundaries of states and land surveys, he said, "Every generation of men, every Congress, every Committee on Appropriations honors itself and its intelligence when it helps on this grand and comprehensive and very important work."¹

At this point, before passing to the consideration of the direct connection which Garfield had with certain educational institutions, it may be appropriate to refer to the interest which he took in sundry aspects of the race question in America. The years after the Civil War were marked by a succession of furious Indian outbreaks, culminating in the savage fighting of 1866-1868, which not only hampered the construction of the Pacific Railroad, but brought disaster and suffering to the northwestern frontiers. In 1868, stirred by the revelations of extensive corruption on the part of Indian agents largely responsible for these wars, Garfield introduced a bill to transfer Indian affairs from the Interior to the War Department. His purpose in this he stated in reply to Windom, chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, who strenuously objected to leaving the control over what ought to be peaceful relations in the hands of military men. Garfield said, December 7:² "We shall make a successful beginning of the whole business by putting all this work into the hands of the War Department, where all the officers are subject to the jurisdiction of courts-martial. . . . We shall thus remove one of the most tempting opportunities for corruption known to our government."

The bill passed with a rush, 116 to 33, but was side-

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., p. 3765.

² *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., p. 17.

tracked in the Senate. Then Garfield, on February 1 and 4, tried to get the transfer added as an amendment to the Indian appropriation bill, but was unable to get the necessary two-thirds under the rules the first time and was ruled out of order the second. Again on February 8 and 27 he brought up the question, and on these various occasions he repeatedly used what was, for him, almost violent language. On February 4 he read a letter from one of his military friends (General D. S. Stanley) describing the gross frauds practiced in the furnishing of Indian supplies and pensions, and proclaimed:¹ "On my responsibility as a member of this House I shall now and henceforward vote in the negative on the final passage of every Indian bill for the appropriation of money until the channels of that expenditure be cleansed and the whole service purified." On February 27 he again spoke at length, covering with ridicule the huge payments to "carry out treaty obligations" regardless of the fact that the tribes in question had just been on the war path, and called it "a stench in the nostrils of the American people."²

In the short session of 1869 a new policy was begun by providing for the expenditure of \$2,000,000 by the President "to maintain peace and promote civilization," while an Indian commission was to exercise joint control with the Interior Department over expenditures. When asked by Garfield, April 8, if this was intended to purify the Indian service, Dawes, chairman of the Appropriation Committee, replied humorously:³ "The whole appropriation bill is lifted out of that awful and terrible condition depicted to us . . . by the gentleman from Ohio, when he said that as long as he lived, he never would vote for another Indian appropriation that ran through that filthy channel." Garfield replied, "I am very glad to hear what the gentleman has said, for I had hoped I might be relieved from the pledge I had made." Dawes continued, "It was in order to secure the support of

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., p. 881.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1700.

³ *Ibid.*, 41 Cong., 1 sess., p. 648.

the distinguished gentleman from Ohio that the committee of conference have labored all day to accomplish this result. (Laughter.)”

While Garfield accepted this change as an effort in the right direction, he did not by any means abandon his critical attitude toward the Indian administration. What particularly concerned him was that the federal government should exhibit the most scrupulous good faith in carrying out all treaties, even though the Indians were not really foreign nations. In the session of 1869-1870 a demand by the Senate that the House appropriate money to execute “treaties” made by the commissioners under the statute of the preceding year, led to a stubborn deadlock. The House would consent to vote the money only with a proviso that it should not be considered as ratifying the so-called “treaties.”

In the next session a clause in the appropriation bill prohibited any more “treaties,” thereby stopping this practice. During the debate Garfield spoke warmly in favor of the “peace policy” and predicted the final civilization of the race (January 25). “If we put these Indians on reservations, if we give them the right to hold property in severalty, we will find, by and by, at the top of a slowly ascending scale, they will have the ballot and a distinct self-government which will be the final solution of the problem.” They should begin as a territory and ultimately become citizens of a state. As he spoke members rose all round to answer him, members who habitually spoke of the Indians as devils incarnate. “I see all the warlike gentlemen on their feet,” concluded Garfield, half-humorously, “I see them springing up all around me, like warriors from the ambush, ready for fight and the spirit of their doctrine on this subject makes me feel as though I should have to dodge a hatchet for the sentiments I have uttered.”¹

In the next Congress, on January 30, 1872, Garfield, while supporting appropriations in strict accordance with the existing treaties, rejoiced at their discontinuance and looked forward to the time when “this kind of appropriation

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 41 Cong., 3 sess., p. 754.

will be known only among the antiquities of our legislative history. . . . Wise Statesmanship and Christianity alike demand that the present humane policy toward the Indians be vigorously supported.”¹

Later in that same year Garfield had personal experience in Indian diplomacy when he went as a United States commissioner to Montana, to induce the Flathead Indians to remove peaceably from the Bitter Root Reservation to another and more suitable place, in conformity with a treaty of 1855, a presidential order of 1871 and a statute of June 5, 1872. Garfield’s report, printed with the annual report of the Secretary of the Interior² dated November 15, 1872, shows that he accomplished his task with patience and sympathy, and a keen eye for the real situation. He found, for instance, on his arrival in Montana, that there were wild rumors of an uprising, and demands for troops from the white inhabitants of the Bitter Root region, but he observed, “From the conversations of citizens who visited me at Missoula it soon became apparent that the chief anxiety of the settlers of the valley was to secure the establishment of a military post and that the market which would thus be afforded for their home products was really a matter of greater consideration than protection against Indians.”³

He discovered his chief difficulty to be in the deep distrust on the part of the Flatheads that the United States Government would carry out any promises, for which, he remarked, they had abundant reason. Practically none of the pledges made in 1855 had been carried out, the Indian agency had squandered money and for the large sums appropriated annually for the benefit of the Flatheads there was little to show.⁴ By making a new contract and seeing that immediate steps were begun to carry out the promises of new houses and equipment at the new location, he secured their agreement.

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 42 Cong., 2 sess., p. 718.

² House Exec. Doc. No. 1, pt. v, 42 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 494-503.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 497.

In the Congress of 1875-1876 the proposal to transfer the Bureau of Indian affairs to the War Department was once more brought up. Garfield's speech on this occasion was one of those candid ones which his friends thought showed "weakness," for in it he frankly admitted doubt in his own mind. On April 20 he said that the reasons which existed when he brought in his bill of 1868 no longer remained, owing to the adoption of the "peace policy." "We had under this new policy," he said,¹ "and very early in its administration, one commissioner who certainly did credit to the country and the service. I refer of course to General Walker. Under his wise, able and honest management we saw the Indian Department largely rescued from the slough into which it had fallen. . . . I am not here to say I believe very strongly in the ultimate success of making good citizens of the Indians. . . . It is our duty to see the peace plan and policy fairly tried. . . . After we shall have fairly tried it, if it shall prove to be a failure, I will then go for transferring the Bureau to the War Department. . . . I admit there is a great deal to be said on both sides of this question. I admit that since this debate began I have wavered in my own mind how we should act, but it is not in the remotest degree connected with party feeling. . . . I would as cheerfully vote—and when this debate began, I was inclined to vote—with friends over the way."

Three years later the same question came up in the form of a rider to the Indian Appropriation Bill and again Garfield (February 8) spoke against the policy of transfer, although he was willing to support a proposal leaving it with the option of the President to transfer any specific tribe or tribes to military control if he deemed it necessary. His last utterance in the session of 1879-1880, April 15, was once more an insistence upon the strictest good faith. "Gentlemen on the other side," he began, but interrupted himself to say, "There should be no 'other side' on a question of this nature." The proposal before the House was to cut down appropriations that were due to the Sioux Indians

¹ *Cong. Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2672.

in consequence of the general pacification policy of 1877. "We are now told," he said, "all round that these wild, fighting Indians are becoming more quiet, more civilized, more peaceable." But if on no pretext and without warning the money payments were cut down they would very likely revert to warfare. "If our pioneers," he concluded, "are scalped and murdered those who are left can point to our interference as the cause of all the trouble."¹

Garfield's only direct connection with the postwar negro problem, while not legislative in character, was doubtless a result of his residence in Washington. This was his membership on the Board of Trustees of the Hampton Institute at Norfolk, then being established under the leadership of that energetic and devoted Williams alumnus, Samuel G. Armstrong. His first visit was on July 2, 1869, when, in company with President Mark Hopkins, Professor Northrop of Yale and others, he went there as a member of a committee of inspection. "We spent a busy and delightful day," he reported (July 3), "visiting the fort and the school . . . which concluded by our agreeing upon a report which Dr. Hopkins is to write."

The next year Garfield accepted an election to the Board of Trustees, and his correspondence shows him in frequent communication with Armstrong, discussing problems, giving advice and now and then furnishing actual assistance in legal matters. But the impression is created by Garfield's letters that while he theoretically approved of the methods in use at Hampton, the sort of education there given did not, in fact, appeal to his sympathy very strongly. To him education was a matter of high and absorbing aspiration, its goal was the production of scholars, philosophers and scientists, and the problem of laying the foundations for the economic self-support of a dependent race was something wholly different.

In a letter of September 27, 1870, to Armstrong, Garfield discussed the manual labor element in the Hampton training, upon which he felt that Armstrong laid unduly heavy

¹ *Cong. Record*, 46 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2444.

emphasis. "I would not," he said, "were I in your place, commit myself absolutely to the policy of manual labor in schools as a principle of general application, for the reason that hitherto all such experiments have finally failed, and for the stronger reason that very much manual labor is incompatible with a very high degree of mental cultivation. If you have not already seen it, please read Eliot's paper in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1869, particularly where he discusses this topic. This and one other article on the same subject made him president of Harvard. While I endorse this view as a general principle I fully and cordially support the labor feature of your school as the proper course at least for the present. I defend it on the ground of the peculiar and exceptional situation in which we now find the colored people at the South. The problem is, how best to lead them up from the plane of mere drudgery to one of some culture and finally of high culture." He closed by advising him not to plant himself on the ground of labor as a general principle as "a doctrine that we may hereafter be required to retract and apologize for."

It is interesting to observe how entirely in this letter he ignored the social element involved in the Hampton training. To him education was primarily an affair for the individual soul. Yet two years later, in a letter to Governor Fairchild of Wisconsin (April 19), he put the case in defense of Armstrong's ideals very clearly. "Whatever doubt there may be," he began, "and I admit there is ground for some, of the success of any manual labor school, it is clear that the first want of the freed people of the South is to know how to live and how to work. And the industrial and agricultural features of the Institution at Norfolk have thus far proved of splendid success in that direction." In addition he heartily approved the plan of making the school a normal one for the furnishing of colored teachers, of the custom of giving special instruction to the more intelligent, and finally the location of the school actually among the colored people.

Garfield's trusteeship lasted only to 1875. He had found attendance at the board meetings very difficult, frequently

apologized to Armstrong for his absence, and finally, when the latter intimated that it was hardly worth while for him to be a trustee under the circumstances, he realized the justice of the criticism and tendered his resignation (June 18, 1875).

Fully as important as the Congressional aspect of Garfield's interest in education were the services he was able to render to his old-time school and college and the educational doctrines which he from time to time put forth in that connection. Here he was acting primarily as a loyal alumnus, and in all that he said or did for either institution his affection and his gratitude were never-faillingly expressed. Of the two there can be no doubt that the Eclectic stood first, the place of his first loves and early aspirations, the scene of his labors as teacher and principal and for years the center of the little circle of friends among whom he had dreamed of passing his whole life.

It has been shown with what reluctance he abandoned the idea of returning to it after the war. He left his name on the catalogue as late as 1863. After that time his letters to his wife and to Rhodes and Hinsdale were filled with inquiries after the school, with solicitude for its fate and hopes for its continued existence in spite of trials and difficulties. In 1865 he boldly promised no less than \$1,000 to aid it, and satisfied his pledge by turning over \$750 in cash and 400 shares of the oil stock which he acquired that year from the Phillips brothers. In 1866 he was made a trustee and thereafter attended the annual meetings with as much regularity as his Congressional duties would permit, while his correspondence shows him taking an unfailing interest in all current problems, often sending suggestions and giving what assistance he could.

In 1867 the institution was incorporated as a college, but the change of name did not bring any added prosperity, for the financial resources continued to be meager and the faculty small. The school struggled on, year after year, frequently incurring deficits and straining the slender resources of the Disciples who served on the Board of Trustees. It

was injured by the founding of another Disciple institution by Isaac Errett, at Alliance, in the very next county, and hampered by difficulties with the local Hiram church and in its own teaching force. Garfield did what he could to help, but he was usually at arms' length. A letter from him to a Disciple correspondent (Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, August 10, 1868) will illustrate his attitude: "I found college affairs badly mixed up and withal a considerable acrimony of feeling among those who ought to be friends. How it will all turn out, I cannot tell. . . . The institution is so related to my life and its history so entwined around my heart that the thought of its breaking down gives me keen pain."

In the year 1870 his association with the college was greatly strengthened by the election of his friend Hinsdale to the presidency. The effect of this appointment was to draw Garfield into a closer connection with the college than ever before. His letters show him constantly discussing policies both educational and financial. In 1871 he succeeded in getting his other Alma Mater, Williams, to give Hinsdale an honorary degree. Hinsdale says of this period:¹ "He conscientiously performed his duties as a member of the Board of Trustees. No member was more useful or made more sacrifice to be present at the meetings." Record should also be made of the fact that he always stood with the most liberal in his contributions to the treasury. In 1870 he undertook to assist Hinsdale in raising money and wrote to a number of former Eclectic students and to sundry prosperous Disciples asking for contributions. Nothing could have been more distasteful to him. Each succeeding letter, as it stands in his letter-book seems to grow more and more apologetic in tone, reflecting the increasing discomfort of the writer. In asking his old pupil, Jonas Learned, son of the Poestenkill friends, he remarked (December 3), "I always supposed that I possessed an ordinary amount of courage but I find that I am entirely lacking in that kind of courage that makes solicitors." Still, he did secure contributions.

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 100.

Some of his notes of trustee meetings show that he took his duties very seriously and drew conclusions from the fate of Hiram under his friend's presidency that show the inevitable drawbacks of pure scholarship and intellectual power as the main asset of a college. On June 11, 1873, he wrote: "The college is more and more directly grappling with the fates in the struggle for existence. . . . It is harder for an institution as for a man to 'roost' high than low." When the Board of Trustees met, June 18-20, it had to raise fifteen hundred dollars among its members to meet college expenses. "I gave one hundred and fifty dollars which was more than I could really afford, but it seemed necessary."

Two years later, at the trustee meeting on June 21, 1876, Garfield recorded his doubts. "The college has greatly run down in students and has fallen behind in revenues. I am not a little disturbed at its condition. With all of Burke's good qualities I fear he will never acquire the power to attract young people, except of the most studious class." But the trustees "tided over the immediate difficulties" and the same day, June 22, Garfield delivered the Commencement address. The next year he was present faithfully at the trustees' meeting June 20, 1877. "Stopped at Father Rudolph's and at eleven met the board of Trustees and held a long session. The financial affairs of the College are in a critical condition and I am troubled about its future. Attended the reunion of the Olive Branch in the evening and Professor Munroe, President J. H. Rhodes and I made a few remarks."

"So long as Hiram was his home," writes Hinsdale,¹ "he gave the students occasional lectures; and even after he moved away, on his flying visits he would visit the chapel if possible and make a 'talk.'" In the spring of 1871 he gave a course of lectures on "Social Science" which was an outgrowth of his reading in preparation for the census bill of 1869 in "the literature of statistics, English, French and Belgian." Professor Demmon of the Hiram faculty wrote that they were on "Methods of Thought; A Classification of the Sciences; Practical Value of Social Science; Preserva-

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 100.

tion and Extension of Life; Society and Government, their Nature and Origin; Reign of Law." "The lectures," he says, "were full of suggestive thought and happy illustration and were delivered in the General's engaging manner, greatly to the delight and instruction of us all. They were given off-hand, apparently from rough notes. A rational and at the same time a devout spirit ran through them all." Garfield wrote of this series to Cox (June 9): "I have just completed a course of seven lectures before the college here on social science. I feel all the time the necessity to do something outside the rough things of public life as a means of keeping the breath of scholarly life in my body."

During the dismal weeks he spent at Hiram in the spring of 1873 while the Reserve was raging over the salary vote, he found diversion and comfort in the college doings of the season. "April 22. At eleven I went to the College and attended a recitation on the Constitution of the United States. Teaching is a noble work which pays as it goes, pays in fresh young gratitude, not of the Sidney Smith kind." "April 28. After tea I sat with Burke till after nine p.m. hearing a case of difficulty between two college boys and aiding in its settlement. It recalls my old work here and brings back my old love for school work." "April 29. In the evening went to the College with Hinsdale and made a short address to the Sophomore class on the occasion of their organization as a class society. Teaching young people came back to me as an old pleasure which I greatly relish."

Garfield's absorption in his Mentor farm and the severe Congressional contests of the summers of 1878 and 1879 kept him away from Hiram in these years, except that on January 3, 1878, he addressed the students "on public life and some of its phases. A pretty fair lecture but not satisfactory to myself." In 1880, however, he was once more with his old friends. "To Hiram he came," wrote Hinsdale,¹ "June 10, 1880, two days after his nomination at Chicago partly to attend the Commencement, but more to be present at the great re-union that is held every five years. How dif-

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 104.

ferent his coming from that of 1851! Then he came unobserved, a student plain and poor; now he comes with flags and bands of music, powerful friends and a huzzaing multitude and a troop of correspondents to tell it to all the world." On the next day, he presided over the Reunion and at both the Commencement and the Reunion he made short speeches, the first one a model Commencement address for its avoidance of the commonplace, the unreal, the tawdry; the second a reminiscent speech full from beginning to end of his strong sentiment for the old days and the old associates.

It was this, after all, that underlay Garfield's interest in Hiram college, his affection for his own school. In 1876 he gave full and public expression to this deep feeling on his part in his memorial address on Almeda Booth. Largely personal in character, as befitted the subject, it had for background his own poignant memories of the days of 1851 to 1861 and its opening sentences revealed the powerful effect it had on his emotions. "At every step of my preparation," he said, "I have encountered troops of thronging memories that swept across the field of my life, and so filled my heart with the lights and shadows of their joy and sorrow that I have hardly been able to marshal them into order or give them coherent voice."¹

Garfield's relations with Williams College, while less constant and intimate than those with Hiram, were hardly less important in his life and deserve full recognition in this chapter. The central point here lay in the reverence and affection which Garfield carried away from Williams in 1856 and retained through life for President Mark Hopkins as the greatest single intellectual influence he had ever felt. It was this which formed the connecting tie during the years after 1859, when Garfield had received his Master's Degree, while he was in Ohio, or in the army, or beginning his Congressional career.

In June, 1862, Garfield began what was to be a long correspondence with his honored teacher by writing the following letter. "In the field near Corinth. Please find en-

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 290.

closed," he wrote, "a draft on New York, for sixty dollars, payable to your order. You will remember that you loaned me forty dollars in the last year of my college course from a fund which Christian benevolence had placed at your disposal. The enclosed amount will probably cover the interest and enable you to aid some student hereafter whose necessity may be as great as mine then was. It was a great favor to me at that time but it was only one of the many and greater favors for which I have to thank you."

President Hopkins answered this, heartily, the same month, assuring him that the money would be given to aid some other worthy student, and later, in November, 1863, wrote to him again, inquiring whether his first reply had been received and adding, "Your name has been and will be referred to in the gatherings of the Alumni with distinguished honor, and if God should spare you to see peace restored you will have a record to be rejoiced in."

To this Garfield replied, December 12, 1863, in a letter showing the humility and reverence which he felt toward his old teacher. "I am sure you do not know how great a gratification it is to me to know that I am kindly remembered by you whom I so much reverence and to whom I am under so many obligations. It heightens my regard to know that what you did for me, you are daily doing for others. I know of no prouder place in the world of work and duty than that which is worthily filled in leading young men to a higher and truer life. I bought your work on Moral Philosophy last winter and read it in camp. Added to its truths were the happy memories of college life and of your discussions of the same themes. I am anxious to know how it has been received by the Theologians and scholars of the day. . . . I have met your sons Harry and Archie. They are spoken of here and in the army as you would wish them to be. . . . You have certainly furnished your quota to the army."

With these letters began a correspondence which continued at intervals during the rest of Garfield's life, a correspondence in which the younger man remained always reverently at the feet of his old teacher. The admiration he expressed

to President Hopkins was by no means kept for him alone. In December 7, 1862, when he had bought the *Moral Philosophy* above referred to, he wrote to Rhodes, "The whole book has the genuine ring of the old Prex metal and you must not fail to get it." In 1864, when urging Hinsdale to finish his education by going to Williams as he himself had done, and offering him financial aid, he said (April 27), "In looking over my own college course, I give more value to the example and teachings of President Hopkins, his modes of thought and the exhibition of his peculiar style of mind, than to all the rest of my course there." But Garfield added, significantly, that the undergraduate life would do his friend good. "I think it is a good thing for a man to give himself up in a good degree to the vivacity and occasional nonsense of college life. I think you are in danger of being too sober and sensible and may get old too fast."

A few years later Garfield wrote to his classmate, Rockwell (August 30, 1869): "President Hopkins' new book, *The Law of Love and Love as a Law*, has lately been reviewed by Dr. McCosh, and Prex has responded to the Dr. who has rejoined and the Prex is about to fire another broadside. It is a war of giants and our ship (Mark) is doing honor to the port whence it sailed. I wish I had a set of the articles to send you." Writing to Russell Errett on July 14, 1871, he enclosed a copy of Dr. Hopkins's sermon on "Scepticism." "Every year seems to have added sweetness and light to the spirit of its author. I think it will be difficult to find a discussion of scepticism more liberal to the honest doubter and yet more searching in its analysis and statements. . . . Dr. Hopkins is now the oldest in service of any American College president. But though he has served thirty-five years, his baccalaureate sermon of two weeks ago was one of his best."

By the time Garfield wrote this last comment he had been drawn back into such relations with Williams as were open to an alumnus. His first step in that direction was taken in 1866, when he went, with his wife, to attend Commencement and enjoy a tenth-year reunion with his class. The contem-

porary account of the exercises in the Springfield *Republican* shows that he attended all the various meetings and spoke several times. Of his appearance at the alumni meeting it says that "after the remarks upon the obituary list General Garfield of Ohio was called upon for a speech. He responded in a little speech which for clearness, simplicity and modesty is rarely excelled. There was nothing of dash or arrogance about the speech as might almost be expected when a graduate of ten years' standing wins a Major General's stars and a seat in Congress but he spoke pleasantly and warmly of his old college associations and hopefully of the present and future."

He wrote of this to Rockwell (August 13): "My visit to Williams has washed out the footprints of ten years and made me a boy again. Strolling on the shore of life it is with reluctance that I plunge back into the noisy haunts of men. The noble reunion has wedded my heart more than ever to the class and to old Williams. Let us hereafter not cease to pay that reverence which is due to youth. I mean to go back to Williams as often as I can. The place, and its associations shall be to me a fountain of perpetual youth. If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should not grow old."¹

In spite of this resolution, Garfield's public duties and domestic distractions kept him away from Commencement for several years. Frequently invited to be present, he could only write declinations, with a word or two of affection and loyalty. It was not until 1871 that Garfield next visited the college, attending the fifteenth anniversary meeting of the class, on which occasion he not only enjoyed a delightful class meeting but took part in various academic gatherings and was elected president of the Alumni Association for the coming year.

This step brought him to the front among the alumni, at the very time when a movement began among the friends and graduates of the college that stirred him to several emphatic expressions of educational beliefs. The situation

¹ Bundy, *Life of Gen. J. A. Garfield*, p. 44.

was as follows: At Williams, as at Hiram, the college, still living under the traditions and principles of the first half of the century, suffered from the unsettling conditions following the Civil War. Numbers declined, revenue had fallen off, and an agitation began for a new and more modern sort of education than that administered by Mark Hopkins. Into this controversy Garfield, pausing in his engrossing Congressional duties and his growing law practice, felt impelled to step when in 1871 he was brought face to face with faculty and undergraduate discontent.

He first became aware of it when he attended an alumni dinner in New York, and listened to a gloomy speech from Professor Bascom on the conditions of the college. He also found that many alumni considered that the principal need of the college was for more buildings, improved equipment and a larger plant. When called on to speak Garfield took strong exception to this last, maintaining that the true policy for Williams or any college was to maintain a distinguished and well-paid faculty, able to lead and inspire. It was in this after-dinner speech that Garfield made the remark which has been more quoted than any other utterance of his on any subject, and has become the standard, almost the commonplace, illustration of the supreme importance of the teacher in education.

The traditional form of his saying is that he would define "a university as a student on one end of a log and Mark Hopkins on the other," but the contemporary testimony seems to indicate that he used a less pungent figure. A version in *"President Garfield and Education"* (p. 43) purporting to be a direct quotation from the speech runs: "To all that has been said, I most heartily assent. No words of mine shall in any way detract from the importance of everything that has been urged; but I am not willing that this discussion should close without mention of the value of a true teacher. Give me a log hut, with only a simple bench, Mark Hopkins on one end and I on the other, and you may have all the buildings, apparatus and libraries without him." Still another version was given by Washington Gladden,

Williams 1859.¹ "What Garfield said (and I heard him say it, at a Williams banquet at Delmonico's in New York) expressed the feeling of many another graduate of the Berkshire college. 'A pine bench with Mark Hopkins at one end of it and me at the other is a good enough college for me.'"²

In any case, the idea was strongly in Garfield's mind, for in letters at this same time he repeated it in substance, although there is no record of his having employed the "log" simile. In declining an invitation to attend a Williams dinner in Boston he took occasion to say: "I hope our Boston brethren will not think it out of place to enquire earnestly after the health and prosperity of the College. I venture to suggest two things that ought to be kept steadily in view in all efforts to promote its welfare. First. That it shall continue to be a College in the fullest and best meaning of that word and neither try to become a University nor try to adopt university plans, and; Second. That the chief efforts made in its behalf shall be directed not so much to halls and buildings as to an increased endowment, for paying professors, for making tuition as nearly free as possible and for putting the cost of living within the reach of students whose means of support are most slender. So long as Williams College can offer salaries which will command and retain the very best teaching talent of the country, she will offer a far greater attraction to thoughtful and ambitious students than any splendor of her architecture or richness of her cabinets and libraries. Such a College can bring the personal influences of its Professors much more fully to bear on its students than can be done in a University. I believe then, that the two great supports of the College are cheap bread and costly brains."³

For taking this position Garfield was assailed over the initial 'H' in the *Williams Review* (February 5, 1872), a college publication, on the ground that he was reactionary and conservative. "Give me *Mark* with a piece of birch to write

¹ *Recollections*, p. 72.

² For other contemporary versions, see *Williams Vidette*, January 27, 1872, and *Williams Review*, February 5, 1872.

³ J. B. Crandall, January 2, 1872.

upon and I'll defy all the Colleges in the country,' exclaimed Gen. Garfield at the New York dinner. This sounds well and doubtless everyone cheered, but it don't mean anything. Give us the same faculty we have and sufficient money to warrant their working *entirely* for our college, and we'll run a lively opposition to Gen. Garfield's College and get 'Mark' to, or any other man that is mortal and needs bread. . . . We could run out the General's old style College." An editorial in the same number queried the value of such addresses. "Is this gushing style of eloquence, which revels in air-castles and congratulations useful and healthful? Do these mutual-admiration-college-reminiscences, panegyrics of the past, made over a loaded table . . . create that healthful, pushing atmosphere which is the true end for which these gatherings of our clan were instituted?"

Garfield promptly came to his own defense in a letter of February 9, 1872. "I am unwilling," he wrote, "that any alumnus or student of Williams shall think that I have ever opposed any improvement in the condition of the College or that I do not desire a large endowment. The substance of my remarks at the New York dinner was that the great mistake which College donors and trustees are now making is that their gifts and expenditures are devoted too exclusively to building libraries and museums rather than to the endowment of professorships. I insisted that bricks and mortar and even museums and libraries are far less important than a strong faculty well supported. Referring to my own college experience I said that no amount of material apparatus would have given me the intellectual aid which I received from the faculty and particularly from the President. . . . I agree with your correspondent that the college cannot live on its past history, but I suggest to him that it cannot afford either to despise or forget its past. When 'H' has run out the 'General's old style of college' let us hope that he may have retained in his memory all the inspiration that the 'old' Williams has awakened in her children. I object, however, to any man who considers the College an old garment unfit for new cloth."

In this Garfield was fighting hopelessly against the current, for in the years after the Civil War the movement for material reconstruction of the colleges gained strength as the prosperity and business activity of the country grew. In the case of Williams, the ideal of a college to train in thinking, as the old Williams had done, was crumbling under the new social conditions, and by the spring of 1872 the demand for a new and more businesslike régime than that of Garfield's revered teacher had carried the day. Mark Hopkins announced his intention of resigning the presidency, while retaining his professorship, and his place at the head was to be taken by P. A. Chadbourne of the Williams faculty, whose main field was science but who prided himself particularly upon his business ability. It was hoped that under him Williams could be brought more into the current of the post-bellum social developments.

To Garfield this resignation of his beloved teacher was a moving event. When it was first announced to him he wrote to Archibald Hopkins (May 26), suggesting that his father might well come to reside in Washington. "It will be a matter of profound regret," he added, "if your father should continue to work in the College so long that he will not have time to revise and prepare his works for publication. In that way he can become the teacher of many generations of men hereafter." In June President Hopkins wrote to Garfield, inviting him to attend the Commencement as his guest and receive the degree of LL.D. In accepting the invitation Garfield wrote (June 11): "I cannot think of your resignation without pain and regret and yet I have no doubt you have done the best thing. . . . I know I speak the sentiments of all who ever enjoyed your instruction when I express the hope that you will publish your lectures to the Senior class," and he signed his name "with sentiments of veneration and affectionate respect."

The account of the occasion in Garfield's journal and in the college and other papers of the time shows that he stayed at President Hopkins's, presided at the alumni meeting and was reëlected president, but declined an election as trustee

of the college. At the annual Commencement, on June 27, he received the honorary degree of LL.D. in the forenoon, and in the subsequent ceremonies attending the resignation of President Hopkins and the inauguration of President Chadbourne, he made an address of welcome on behalf of the alumni. With all the sentiment he felt for his old teacher, it was to him a moving occasion. He wrote to Hinsdale (June 30): "The exercises were very solemn and impressive. The resignation of Dr. Hopkins was a noble act and the final speech in which he delivered up the keys to his successor was one of the rarest grandeur and simplicity. . . . I staid with Dr. Hopkins as guest and it was very touching when the old President bade me good-bye saying 'You will observe that I remarked that the concluding and final act of my official life before laying down the office, [was] the conferring upon you of the degree LL.D. I was glad to have my words thus associated with your name.' "

Of his own speech Garfield said to his wife (June 8): "My friends here say I have seldom done so well though I had no time to write it out. . . . The Commencement has been one of deep and solemn interest to me, and I do so much regret that you were not with me. I hope we shall some day have the joy to witness the graduation of our dear boys at Williams." Garfield summed up on that occasion his feeling of gratitude and reverence for Mark Hopkins and what he had done, and at the same time with graceful tact welcomed the newcomer. The figure of speech with which he turned to President-elect Chadbourne has become a tradition in the history of the college. "We cannot," he said (*Williams Vidette*, July 6) "if we could, transfer to any other the profound reverence, the deep affection with which we cherish the name and fame of the retiring president. His title to this is unchangeable and imperishable. . . . We will not ask you to bend the bow of Ulysses. Let it here remain unbent forever as the sacred symbol and trophy of victories achieved. But we do expect you to confront the future with its new and different problems in a spirit conservative to save all the

garnered wisdom which experience has purchased, and courageous to adopt and lead all true reforms."

Four years later Garfield paid another visit to Williams which was almost equally delightful. It was in 1876, the twentieth anniversary of his graduation, when, in addition to his class celebration, he was the orator of the occasion, delivering an address "before the literary societies." His journal gives a detailed account of his doings, from Saturday, June 24, when he arrived to be Professor A. L. Perry's guest—bringing with him into the already large Perry household his wife and the two older boys—to Thursday, June 29, when the party finally left for the South. It was a time of happy reminiscence and visiting. He dined with Dr. Hopkins, he called on Mrs. Tyler, the "widow woman" who was so kind to him in 1854, he visited long with his classmates, going over the class-list of 1856 and following out the history of each member. He heard Dr. Hopkins's centennial address, "which was in his best vein of analysis and ornate style. It was really a most masterly production." He listened to William Cullen Bryant's reminiscences at the alumni dinner; he sat up late visiting with President Bascom of Wisconsin University and Professor Perry, both of whom had been his teachers in 1856.

His own address, "A Century of Congress," was of a kind which nobody would have dreamed of making twenty years before, an analysis of Congressional government not under the guise of constitutional theory but under the conditions of actual working politics. Published the next year as an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, it has assumed the place of a classic treatment of the subject, constantly quoted as an authority by all subsequent writers, so long as the conditions which prevailed in the seventies persisted. Even now, when the development of American economic life has materially changed the nature of Congressional legislation, and the grosser forms of the spoils system have been done away with, the address stands as an authentic historical exposition.

That Garfield, the same man who delivered his Commencement part on "Matter and Spirit" in 1856 and en-

titled his Master's Oration of 1859 "Art an Educator," should have thought such a subject suitable for an academic occasion shows how far he had traveled since his own early days. As it was, he felt some misgivings. He records of its reception: "At half past seven Mr. Gilbert, President of the Adelphic Union called and accompanied us to church which was well filled with a very distinguished audience. Read my address which occupied an hour and twenty-five minutes. It was well received, but I think, as I expected, its historical part was too long." The class feeling was, after all, the central thing of the whole visit and of it Garfield noted: "Our meeting was a most delightful one. . . . The class feeling is really stronger today than when we parted twenty years ago."

Garfield did not again visit Williamstown in the next four years, owing to the pressure of his public duties, but he kept up his unfailing interest, and whenever he had occasion to pass by it on the train he recorded his affectionate reminiscences. When going to speak in the Maine campaign, "I passed over the old line from Troy to Williamstown," he wrote home (August 30, 1878), "catching a glimpse of the college buildings and Greylock. . . . The trip has been full of old memories and traditions and I have hardly been able to make myself believe that nearly a quarter of a century has passed since I first saw the hills of New England." The next year he had the same experience, August, 1879. The journal runs: "Took a berth in the sleeping car, lay awake nearly an hour, reviewing and comparing with the present, my state of mind when I left Troy twenty-three years ago just after my graduation at Williams. Fell asleep, but the genius of the Hoosac valley awoke me on the way from Williamstown to North Adams. I slept again just as we entered the Hoosac tunnel. I was wide awake a quarter of a century ago, when I drove over this mountain in a stage coach."

It is interesting to see the spirit approximating humility with which Garfield always approached a college community. In 1876 he went by invitation to deliver a speech at Dart-

mouth College and his description of the experience reveals his attitude of mind. "At Hanover," he wrote (March 8), "I staid with ex-Senator Patterson. . . . He had, at dinner, several of the College Professors who received me very kindly and staid until it was time for the meeting. At 7:30 p.m. I went to the old church which was filled with the faculty, students, and citizens—a fine intellectual audience; and I spoke an hour and a half, taking a line of historical and philosophical argument which I felt assured carried my hearers with me. There was a world of fresh and glowing enthusiasm and I felt the echoes of my thoughts coming back to me at every turn of the discussion. . . . This morning Pres. Smith called on me and took me with him to chapel at eight a.m. It was an old time chapel very like the one I sat in at Williams. And in it sat as boys Dan'l Webster, Rufus Choate, S. P. Chase, George Ticknor and many more who have made their names and that of their college illustrious. . . . My meeting at Dartmouth was under the auspices of the college boys and they gave me a handsome serenade at eleven oclock. This morning they drove me to the station and one of them rode with me about twenty miles as an escort. I was touched by the enthusiastic attention they gave me, and yet was saddened to feel how far I have drifted away from their young enthusiasm."

Two years later, in October, 1878, when he went to Rochester, N. Y., to make a political speech, he showed the same modesty. When C. E. Fitch, his Williams acquaintance, gave him a dinner, he noted that "Among the diners was Pres. Anderson of the Rochester University, one of the brightest and ablest college Presidents in the country. . . . I was surprised," he added, "at the evidences that these people were so well acquainted with my public life, and I was specially pleased at the cordial and complimentary way in which I was received by President Anderson. . . . At the close of the speech about twenty five college boys came on the stand to be introduced. Men in college do not think themselves boys, but men—and I was strongly impressed,

as I saw these young fellows, that they were yet only boys, or that I had grown old."

From Rochester, on this same occasion, Garfield went to Ithaca, where he was entertained by President A. D. White of Cornell University, and was again called on by large numbers of students; all of which he especially enjoyed. "Hall very much crowded," he wrote. "Spoke two hours and a half. Extravagant compliments. Very strong approval from President White. Went back to his house, and we talked till an hour past midnight. His recent journey of two years in Europe has been rich in results of scholarly work."

During this midnight conversation, Garfield told his host that he dreamed of returning once more to the field of teaching, after he should have finished his public service, and ending his old age as he had begun his manhood, a professor in some college or university.¹ It may well be doubted whether this would ever have occurred; his long years of Congressional and party activity had made public life a second nature to him, and it is hardly conceivable that anything short of complete physical disability, sufficient to prohibit teaching as well as anything else, could have kept the veteran campaigner out of politics or off the stump. Still, the possibility remains, and it is pleasant to imagine him occupying an old age, had fate spared him, in doing what he loved so much and did so supremely well.

¹ Statement of A. D. White to H. A. Garfield, January, 1912.

CHAPTER XXII

GARFIELD IN THE LAW

MENTION has already been made of Garfield's interest in the law, as a possible field for his life-work, ever since his days of doubt and self-analysis at the Eclectic, and it has been shown how, between 1872 and 1876, he came to the very verge of carrying out a decision to abandon politics and devote himself to legal practice in Cleveland. From this he drew back when, after Hayes's nomination, he accepted the position of administration spokesman in the House, and thereafter, in the exciting political events of his career, ceased to contemplate a change. But as an important side interest which promised for a time to become the principal one, it deserves notice, and in the present chapter it will be briefly dealt with as an element in his intellectual life.

Garfield was admitted to the bar January 26, 1861. Many years later he described the step as follows: "I made my study of the law as complete as anybody I know of, but I did it in my own room at Hiram and was admitted to the Bar in 1861 by the Supreme Court of the State. I went there and asked for a committee to examine me. I had entered my name formally with Mr. Riddle, who was then practicing law in Cleveland, so that I might comply with the statute. I was about forming a law partnership to go into practice when the war struck us, and I never tried a case, never argued a case, never had a law case in any way."¹

When the war was over and Garfield found time to look about him for possible sources of revenue in addition to his Congressional salary, the first use he made of his legal training was along the line of oil development. This interest first

¹ Biographical notes, 1880, also *North American Review*, Vol. CXLIV, p. 565.

caught him as a purely speculative attraction, one of the few in his life. Letters exchanged between him and his former staff officer, Captain Plumb, show that in the winter of 1865 he was perceptibly affected by the oil craze of that period, and entertained, for a time, visions of wealth to be acquired by buying or leasing oil lands in the Big Sandy Valley.

Plumb had made the suggestion in late January. He replied (February 3), "I have conversed on the general question of oil with a number of members who are in the business, for you must know the fever has assailed Congress in no mild form." He suggested that Plumb might well go there at once to report on the rich veins of coal said to exist, and dwelt upon the important fact "that the territory is as yet unoccupied and you and I have a knowledge of it, which will in the first place be valuable in selecting locations and making negotiations and in the second place, should we conclude to form a company, the fact that we had been in military occupancy of the country would give us a power over capitalists that we could hardly expect others to have." Then in a curious mixture of antislavery enthusiasm and the spirit of speculation, he wound up his letter by saying, "Oil, not cotton is King now, in the world of commerce, and it is a beautiful thought that oil is found only in the free states and in the mountains of slave states where freedom loves to dwell." Four months later he was again urging Plumb to go to the valley and bring back a report. (June 13) "I know a large number of capitalists who would be very glad to go into such an undertaking. It would aid us greatly if we could be able to make a full representation of the prospects to leading men here before Congress adjourns. You might at least go up and reconnoiter the territory and get the refusal of some promising territory."

The upshot of this affair was that Garfield with others actually got title to some land in the Sandy Valley. "It secures our debts," he wrote to his wife (May 31, 1865), "and leaves us (myself and co) in possession of over 4000 acres of oil land in the Sandy Valley which we may be able

some time to realize a good sum on." In 1871, hearing that there was a chance to sell, he went on a trip to the scene of his first campaign and succeeded in disposing of his holdings.

In this same year, 1865, he made another important use of his legal powers, when he assisted his friends, the Phillips brothers of Newcastle, Pennsylvania, to organize a corporation in Chicago for the purpose of developing oil lands. At the outset he had high expectations. "It is a work almost as great as a military campaign, but if we succeed it will go far toward settling one of the important and difficult problems in my life which relates to our means of living." (May 12.) But presently his letters reported difficulties arising from the fluctuations in gold, then slowness in selling stock, then "a serious set-back to the scheme." He had to visit the oil fields, to take stock himself, to consult the Phillips brothers over a thousand and one problems. By the middle of the summer the bright visions of immediate returns had faded. "We have had a very slow time," he wrote (July 19), "in collecting money for stock and our present returns will be very small in comparison with our expectations but it will come around in due time."

The company was finally set going and Garfield's labors ended, leaving him with assets which might in the future prove valuable. But he had also acquired a thorough distaste for that sort of work. His letters to his wife form a rising scale of boredom and impatience. He called it "a very heavy undertaking," "dry disagreeable work," and confessed a deep dislike for it all. "I feel a little like a slave working in the mines for his freedom," he said (May 31, 1865), "and have just a little touch of the feeling that the pursuit of wealth is not the noblest thing in the world. My life hitherto has been quite free from that and I wish it might be altogether but poverty is a hard master and if I can make a successful rebellion against him I have no fear of being a slave to money." When it was done Garfield washed his hands of that sort of work for the rest of his life. In 1871 he received offers from the Northern Pacific Railroad to sell lands for it, on a salary of \$10,000 and with a large stock

bonus; but he did not seriously consider it. When the Phillips brothers urged him, in 1874, to go to Europe to sell oil lands, he was attracted by the idea, but solely as a means of going abroad and revisiting the places he had seen in 1867.

Garfield's profits from his early ventures were not large. He wrote to Fuller (May 11, 1875), "In 1865 I made a successful venture in the purchase and sale of oil lands from which I realized about six thousand dollars." In 1880, in an interview with Gilmore, the campaign biographer, he said of the oil deal: "I got in payment some western lands which I held for some time, selling portions of them along from time to time. Then some years ago, I bought a little stock in one of the Bonanza silver mines. I held the stock a couple of years and then sold it, making something upon it—not much. And about 1865 I bought 320 acres of land near Iowa City. That I held about ten years when I sold it, making about fifty per cent. As a general thing I have kept out of speculation. I have no taste for that sort of thing."¹ His lack of any real interest in speculation is shown by his careless and indifferent treatment of the *Crédit Mobilier* offer made to him by Ames. Even if one were to accept the statement of Ames, as the committee did, that Garfield agreed to take the ten shares, it is manifest that he took no pains to follow the matter up and let opportunities for lucrative returns pass without paying any attention to them.

Within a few months from the conclusion of Garfield's ventures into corporation-forming, he was drawn into the field of court practice in so striking a way and with such success on his part as to turn his thoughts once more strongly in the direction of the law as a profession. This was due to his participation in the famous case of *ex parte Milligan* (4 Wallace, p. 2), which came about through a series of accidents. In 1853 certain boys were expelled from the Eclectic for misconduct, largely through the detective efforts of Garfield. Nine years later, when he was waiting at Washington for a command, he met these victims of his disciplinary zeal. "Do you remember the days of Ogle and

¹ *North American Review*, July, 1887, p. 45.

Black at Hiram," he wrote to his wife (December 9, 1862), "two young scamps who were expelled a little while before I went away to college? Black is the son of Jerry Black of Buchanan's cabinet. Ogle is son of the celebrated 'silver spoons' Ogle of Van Buren's time. I met the two boys here the other day. One is clerk in the War Department and the other (Black) is practising law here, where his father now lives." "They laughed about their expulsion," he added to Rhodes (December 7), "and said they deserved it."

Through this good-humored ex-member of the Eclectic, Garfield came to be acquainted with "Jere Black," who was one of the leading lawyers in the country, and a former member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He was now a man of fifty-five and, liking Garfield personally, he made him an offer of a legal partnership, hoping no doubt to use him as an energetic junior associate. This took place as early as 1865. Garfield wrote after an interview (April 10, 1865): "Enough was said yesterday to make me measurably sure that we shall on some terms form a partnership before the day is ended. The judge talks very hopefully and thinks we can reap large mutual advantages from such a partnership. My present impression is that I shall at first make a conditional and temporary partnership which will . . . leave me free to go on in Congress to the end of my term and then I can make a final decision." In spite of this letter, Garfield did not agree to the arrangement, largely because of the oil business which engrossed his time. But in 1866 Judge Black induced him to begin actual law practice in a way which was not only unusual but in a sense dramatic. Garfield described the circumstances in his notes of 1880 as follows:

"The war came, Congress came, and when I had been in Congress two years, it so happened that in company with Henry Winter Davis, whom I admired very much, I had resisted some attempts to extend the power of Military Commissions so as to try civilians who were interfering in any way with the war—such fellows as Vallandigham. I had resisted that as being un-American and contrary to the old

English spirit of liberty. About that time some of the Indiana Democrats or rather, Judge Black, as their attorney, came to me and said that there were some men tried in Indiana for conspiracy against the government in trying to prevent enlistments and to encourage desertion. They had been tried in 1864 while the war was pending and by a court martial sitting in Indiana, where there was no war. They had been sentenced to death. Mr. Lincoln commuted that sentence to imprisonment for life and they were put into state's prison for life. They had taken out a writ of habeas corpus to test the constitutionality and legality of their trial and the judges on the circuit court had disagreed, there being two of them, and certified their disagreement up to the Supreme Court of the United States.

"Jere Black came to me, he had seen what I had said in Congress—and asked me if I was willing to say that in an argument in the Supreme Court. 'Well,' I said, 'it depends upon your case altogether.' He sent me the facts in the case—the record. I read it over and said, 'I believe in that doctrine.' Said he, 'Young man, you know it is a perilous thing for a young Republican in Congress to say that, and I don't want you to injure yourself.' Said I, 'It don't make any difference. I believe in English liberty and English law. But,' said I, 'Mr. Black, I am not a practitioner in the Supreme Court and I never tried a case in my life anywhere.' Said he, 'How long ago were you admitted to the bar?' 'Just about six years ago.' 'That will do,' said he. . . . I had been admitted to the Supreme Court of my state enough years to come under the rules of the Supreme Court.

"I was admitted to the Supreme Court and immediately entered upon this case. The government side of it was defended by the Attorney General, by General Butler, who was called because of his military knowledge, and by two others, I have forgotten who. There was a very strong array of counsel for the government. On the other side were David Dudley Field of New York, Judge Black of Pennsylvania, Judge McDonald of Indiana who had been on the Supreme Bench of that state and I—four on a side. We went in with

unlimited time. The scene was very much like that when I went before Buell. I sat down and worked two days and two nights, with the exception of four or five hours sleep and worked out the points of my argument. The day before the trial was to come off in the court, all the counsel got together for consultation at Washington to determine upon the course of the case and when we got together Judge Black said, 'Well, we will hear from the youngest member in the case first. What do you intend to do?'

"Well, there were the very foremost lawyers in the land and I had to put myself forward before them and show my hand. I took my points and stated succinctly the line of my argument and when I got through they said with one accord 'Don't you change a line or word of that.' The next day I went in and spoke two hours before the Supreme Court, and there is the speech, taken verbatim in shorthand. The Court unanimously decided the case in our favor. . . . McDonald opened the case. I followed, Black followed me and David Dudley Field followed Black in winding it up, and the arguments were reported in full. That gave me immediately a standing in the Supreme Court of the United States and began to bring me in cases."

At the time, Garfield wrote to Hinsdale concerning this (March 6, 1866): "You know my life has been somewhat full of crises. Today there has been another of them." He then described the case and his argument. As in so many instances, this important step was not taken by Garfield on his own initiative, but was the result of another man's suggestion. It is also to be noted that Garfield did an almost unique thing in arguing his first case on a point of constitutional law before the Supreme Court of the United States. He said of this himself in 1880: "There is a group of people who have been very anxious to belittle me as a lawyer. When they come to the De Golyer pavement for instance, they say 'Garfield was not employed as a lawyer because he was not a lawyer.' Now the reason of their feeling about that is that all professions are exceedingly jealous of anybody that comes up to the profession through any other way than the

regular channels. The regular channels are to study in a lawyer's office, sweep the office for a year or two more, then to pettifog in a justice's court, and slowly and gradually, after being sub to everybody, when the older heads begin to die, the man begins to feel his way as a lawyer, and after he has been fifteen or twenty years in practice, if he ever gets a case into the Supreme Court and gets admitted there it is considered a red letter day in his history when he does it."

Garfield's papers show that from this time onward he developed a small but fairly steady legal practice. At the start Black was his associate, but after a few years he stood more frequently by himself and finally traveled rather far from his original field of the Supreme Court. Into the legal detail of these cases it is not worth while to go, except in a few where the interest was something other than points of law or interpretation of evidence. What may be done here is to point out the part that this practice played in Garfield's career, and especially his own attitude toward the law as a profession. At the outset Garfield had rather spectacular cases and tended to look at his experiences as intellectual adventures, while the argument before the court, or the jury, assumed much the same aspect in his eyes as a speech before the House. He tended to estimate his success by the compliments he received upon his argument as a forensic effort. This attitude may be illustrated by some quotations dating from these first years of practice.

The next conspicuous case after the Milligan case was that of the validity of the will of no less a personage than Alexander Campbell himself, which was contested on the ground of his mental incapacity at the time the will was made. The contestants were two groups of Campbell children descended from two successive wives, and the case was tried at Wellsburg, the county seat of Brooke County, in which Bethany was situated. Garfield was retained on the side that wished to maintain the validity of the will, and one can imagine that he entered *con amore* into the defense of the mental integrity of the man who had been his religious master and intellectual idol during all his youth. Some idea

of the weight of the task laid upon him may be gained from the report which he made to Austin of his successful conduct of the suit.

"On Saturday, the 15th Feb.," he wrote (March 2, 1868), "I went from here [Washington] and reached Wellsburg, Va., on Monday the 17th, when the trial of the Campbell Will case began. Judge Black left me the second day and I had the burden of the work and four lawyers against me. It took six days to hear the evidence and two days and a half to argue the case. I closed the case in a speech of six hours and a half and came immediately here. Soon after my arrival on Friday the 28th, I rec'd a dispatch informing me that we had gained our cause; the will and codicil were both sustained. I don't know that I have ever been put in a harder place, or come out more satisfactorily." In a letter to Hinsdale (March 8) he gave additional details: "Young Richardson of Wheeling was my only assistant and he was sick part of the time. There were sixty-eight witnesses and the lawyers on the other side spoke over eight hours. I suppose it may not be immodest for me to say to you that I think I have never done a more creditable piece of intellectual work than on that trial."

Two years later he was retained for the argument before the Supreme Court in the case of *In re Bennet vs. Hunter* (9 Wallace, p. 326), which raised the question of the effects of the Civil War direct tax of 1862 which was framed so as to lead to forfeiture of land if the owner defaulted. In this case a tenant offered to pay the tax but the federal authorities refused the offer, on the ground that only the owner, who was in the Confederate army, was competent to pay. The land was then sold for the tax. After the war the original owner sued to recover. There is no letter extant of Garfield's on this case nor did he keep a journal at that time, but there are preserved a mass of notes in his handwriting and a manuscript draft of his argument which show that he worked out precedents and prepared his speech with the greatest thoroughness. In his argument, February 23, 1870, he closed with the following appeal: "The last time I had

the honor to appear before this court you were then considering in the case of *ex parte Milligan* what were the rights of an American citizen on trial before the law. And you decreed that the shield of equal justice covered all the citizens of the republic, the highest and the lowest, the proudest and the humblest, the innocent and guilty until found unworthy by conviction before a court of competent jurisdiction. You established the right to life and liberty. You are now called upon to make a similar decision relating to the rights of property and to say that these men shall not without due process of law, be stripped of that protection to property which the law gives to every citizen of the Republic." The Court endorsed his position.

The next important case was one of a wholly different type. So far he had had two involving United States constitutional law and one—that of the Campbell will—hinging on a common law definition. He now was called by Judge Black to assist him in a suit of the most complicated character in which the business fate of his friends, the Phillips brothers, was at stake. Briefly stated, the plaintiffs, Brooke and Barrington, had sued for stock and cash due from the Phillipses under agreements which had been modified and were capable of differing interpretations. A master's report found the sum due to be \$246,688.04. This was appealed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and Black, with Garfield, appeared for the Phillips brothers. As soon as Garfield began work he found himself struggling with the intricacies of Pennsylvania law and practice, which was based directly on the English common law. He presently remarked to Rhodes (January 28): "I am laying out a great deal of hard work on the Phillips case. It is full of difficulties and there is more law in it than in any case I have yet taken hold of."

After it was over he wrote to Dr. Robison (March 11): "I have strong hopes of winning it, but it was very tangled and very difficult. Two ex-Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Black and Underwood were in the case, one against me and one with me. My argument was,

I think, not unworthy of the occasion." The decision of the court was a triumph for Black and Garfield, since it reduced the amount to be paid by the Phillips brothers by three-quarters, leaving it only \$62,489.53.¹

All these cases were lucrative ones, except the first, for which Garfield received nothing but the fame or notoriety involved. In writing to Corydon Fuller, May 11, 1871, of his general financial standing he said, speaking of law and business earnings together, "In addition to my Congressional work I have kept up and increased my law practice in the State courts and in the Supreme Court of the U. S. and have, from that source realized about \$2000 a year for the last four years."

All this time Judge Black had a standing offer to Garfield to admit him into partnership, which at times seemed attractive. In July, 1870, for instance, Garfield was returning from Hiram to Washington to complete the long session of Congress. He had been harassed by the "iron men" of his district over the iron tariff and, although he felt certain that their opposition could not prevent his renomination, he was out of humor with his situation. Under the circumstances a mere accident almost carried him over to the law, as described in a letter of July 6 to his wife, from York, Pennsylvania, the home of Judge Black.

"When I awoke at half-past seven this morning I found myself alone on the sleeping car on the side track at York and the train gone on for three quarters of an hour. Some slight accident had happened to the car and it had been left. The conductor had neglected to awaken me and the porter had carried my satchel into the next car and here I was, with nothing in the way of luggage but the first volume of *Earnest Maltravers*." He naturally took refuge with "the noble old judge," who gave him breakfast and a bath and had his servant, said Garfield, "put on me one of the Judge's shirts with a fixed standing collar. So think of me in that ancient and honorable attire."

"The Judge," he went on, "has again made me a business

¹ *Brooke and Barrington vs. Phillips Bros.*, 68 Penn. State 130.

offer, which makes me almost hope that the Convention which meets at this hour (11 a.m.) at Garrettsville will relieve me from further service in Congress. I am, at this moment, greatly tempted to resign. At any rate, I shall think further of the proposition of Judge Black and may conclude to accept it before you see me again." But the news next day that the convention had renominated him by a unanimous vote served to quench this impulse. A year later, after his argument in the Phillips case at Philadelphia in association with Judge Black, the desire revived. "It is remarkable," he wrote (March 8), "how fully I have thrown off, for the time, the griefs that afflicted me about political matters when I left Washington. I wish they might leave the city before I return to it." This was an allusion to the struggle over the Ku Klux bill, then in active progress, with Garfield opposed to the radical element of his party. "There is much in the law," he went on, "that attracts me and makes me wish I were away from the entanglements of politics and earning my bread at the head of my own affairs."

It has been already shown how in 1872 this idea of leaving politics for the law was greatly strengthened by the offer of a partnership with Burke and Estep in Cleveland, which to Garfield was a much more attractive prospect than that offered by Black, since that would involve a continued residence in Washington. This offer was made through James Mason, his wife's cousin (February 10), to whom he wrote a prompt reply. "To make a total change in the current of one's life is no small matter," he remarked, but he went on to ask if his correspondent would ascertain on what terms he could enter such a partnership. "Judge Black," he went on, "offers me a partnership with him here. He has a very large practice in the Supreme Court and he offers me an equal partnership with himself and his son. But I do not like the idea of making Washington my home."

The result of these influences was that Garfield came to the conclusion to leave Congress for the law, but was delayed in his purposes by the salary and *Crédit Mobilier* troubles. After his triumphant reelection in 1874, he came

to a definite decision, which was carried to the point of a tentative agreement with Burke and Estep in the autumn of 1875. The result for Garfield of this slowly maturing purpose had been to drive him into active practice and lead him to accept cases of all sorts, concentrating upon them his utmost powers of study and analysis; all this, be it noted, during the very years when he was carrying on the heavy labors of the Appropriations Committee and at the same time fighting for his political life in the Western Reserve. It is no wonder that in 1875 and 1876 he felt himself on the verge of collapse.

It was a general practice of the most varied kind. He had patent interference and infringement cases, lawsuits for civil damages, suits involving the interpretation of the powers of territorial governments and suits involving the fulfillment of contracts. He was sometimes the leading counsel, sometimes an associate, and occasionally bore the whole burden. Since he had to make a special and individual study of the particular branch of law governing each new case he entered, he became, like every beginner in the law, more and more impressed with the extent of the field he was invading. But this only served as a challenge to his inquiring mind and his unfailing desire to conquer any new intellectual difficulty.

It was inevitable that Garfield as a lawyer should display the same traits as Garfield the Congressman, for at the time when he began this serious study of the law he was forty years old and his personal and mental habits were firmly fixed. It is easy to trace in his journal and letters his developing interest in the details of the subject which, prior to 1872, had been for him mainly an occasion for an oratorical effort, a "speech." He was nearly always contented with his performance as long as he regarded it this way, but as time went on and he came to appreciate more fully the nature of legal knowledge and skill, this early self-satisfaction steadily dwindled. Some of his comments on the more important cases he argued will serve to illustrate this development on his part.

In February, 1872, Garfield was retained in the case of

U.S. vs. 100 Barrels distilled spirits (14 Wallace 44). One Henderson had bought the liquor, had paid the owner and also paid the government tax. The government later seized it on the ground that the previous owner had intended to evade the tax and hence had forfeited it and the sale to Henderson was not valid. The journal and letters will show how Garfield enjoyed his task. "Feb. 3 Spent the whole day in preparing the case. . . . The amount in controversy is not large but it bristles with law points. . . . Feb. 8 Commenced my argument in the Supreme Court. I spoke until adjournment at three o'clock. I satisfied myself better in the management of my voice today than I usually do. Had the close attention of the court. . . . Feb. 9. Went to the Supreme court where I finished my argument, in three quarters of an hour and listened to the Solicitor General in response. I am pretty well satisfied with the case as I have presented it." He wrote to Rhodes on this trial (February 19, 1872): "I had no help whatever in the preparation except that Sheldon prepared part of the last point in reference to estoppel. I argued the case alone, speaking about two hours. Judge Swayne told me afterwards it was the best argument I had ever made before the court." It may be added that the Supreme Court decided against his client in spite of the good argument.

The next year he again went to the aid of the Phillips brothers, when a suit against them, subsidiary to the one already decided, came up for trial. "It is the most singular case I have known," he remarked in the journal September 9, and well he might, for while nominally a distinct suit from the one already decided, it really reviewed the merits of the whole case, and might, conceivably, upset the decision already rendered in the Supreme Court. "It was a suit brought in the Lawrence County court against all the parties to the first suit by two Richardsons who had been in the original agreement and in trying it all the issues already dealt with in the other suit were raised perforce." In his journal, November 3 to 8, he gives a narrative of his conduct of the case and an abstract of his argument. "Proceedings

here are according to the forms of the common law. The feigned issues and other legal fictions are all in vogue here. In Ohio the code has swept them all away." Of his argument he says, "Nov. 7, I satisfied myself fairly on my address to the Court and the jury." His letters to his wife show with what intensity he concentrated. "The case has taken from 9 a.m. till noon and from 2 to 6 p.m. of each day. The court house is a mile away from Thomas Phillips' where I have been staying, and our whole time, mornings and evenings has been absorbed studying the many entanglements of the case. I commenced my speech at 4 p.m. yesterday and spoke until six. This morning I began again at nine and spoke for about an hour and a half."

When, on November 8, the verdict was announced, it reduced the amount due from the Phillips brothers from the sum of \$62,489, awarded in the first trial in 1871, to \$30,000. "My work is considered very successful," Garfield wrote to his wife (November 9), "and was much complimented by the bench and bar. It gives me additional hopes that I can earn a living when I quit Congress. . . . Out of all this trouble and dreariness that have beset us for the past year, let us look forward to an early [escape] from the cares of a public station and a life more devoted to ourselves and our little ones."

A year later, when the Phillipses were in sore straits as a result of the panic of 1873 and the subsequent hard times, Garfield aided them with a legal suggestion. On November 24 he went to Newcastle and after long discussions he records, "Late in the evening I discovered a method of closing up Mr. Phillips's chief trouble, that in relation to the Starr farm, which was to have him confess judgment in the suit for ejectment and thus deliver back the farm which carried with it the contract for purchase and the seventy-five thousand dollars of unpaid purchase money." "I think they may possibly pull through," he reported to Hinsdale (November 28), "but they are having a hard time. I did them a very essential service on my trip."

By 1875 his first complacency was beginning to diminish.

Garfield felt no doubt of his own powers in the law, but was coming to realize that there was more in it than a well-delivered argument. In the case of *Putnam vs. Day* (22 *Wallace* 60), after hearing the argument of Burke, his suggested partner, on January 22, 1875, he reflected: "Judge Burke spoke for a little more than an hour with clearness and force. While listening to him I felt how easily the work I have done during the last ten years would have placed me in a high position at the bar, if I had devoted myself to that profession. It may not be too late even yet. . . ." On January 25 Garfield's turn came to speak. "Kerr commenced his speech about one o'clock. . . . I spoke three-quarters of an hour in reply. Was not very well satisfied with my argument. I feel myself crippled by a lack of technical knowledge and the questions propounded by the Court in the course of the argument placed me, I fear, in an unfavorable light before them."

By the autumn of 1875 Garfield's sense of his own shortcomings in legal training was rapidly growing. He found himself engaged in a suit by the South Street Presbyterian Church of Washington, to compel the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to pay damages which had been awarded by a jury to compensate the church for the damage done to its congregation and revenues from placing a station and tracks close at hand. The case involved the whole theory of indirect injuries and sent Garfield back into the law reports of the state courts and into British courts in the search for precedents. Confronted with the need for more knowledge, he reflected, in the journal (October 27, 1875): "I liken myself to Cortez, who on his first capture of Mexico made one straight and narrow path of destruction from his ships to the capitol, but soon found himself beleaguered in the seat of his own conquest. So I have reached a high place in the law, but have left unconquered many outlying territories of law learning and practice, the enemies whereof now beset me. I do not propose to stand siege but to go out and attack, as Cortez did on his second entry to Mexico. Nearly two days have been spent in conquering one special set of diffi-

culties." The next day he continued with zest: "My work on the Church case has been pleasant and successful. The conquest of yesterday and the day before has made this day full of light. I find special pleasure in reading cases and observing their bearing on my own. Every day I feel more and more how much I have lost in my profession by my long absence from its practice and yet the work I have done has been of no small value in many ways connected with the practice of the law."

This new note of self-criticism appeared in his comment on nearly every case argued in this winter. "Jan. 19 At twelve o'clock I argued the Montana case against Merrick of this city. I did not satisfy myself as well as usual." On February 25 and 28, in the *Hoffman vs. John Hancock Life Insurance Company* case (92 U.S. 161), "I was well prepared for this argument, but did not satisfy myself as usual." When he came to print the argument he was still dissatisfied with his legal style. "April 28 Worked until half past eleven o'clock revising the Reporter's notes of my argument on the Insurance case. . . . I have not yet acquired that deliberation of statement in the Supreme Court that I can command in the House. This doubtless arises from the consciousness that I am imperfectly trained in the law. I must acquire self-possession in the only way possible, that is by enlarging the circle of my knowledge."

Such language indicates that Garfield was beginning to take the same specialist's attitude toward the points of law which he already did toward the rules of the House, regarding them as tools to secure ends. In one of his most important cases he seems to have had the same sense of an equitable position which he frequently exhibited in his House manœuvring. This was the suit which turned on the point whether nonpayment of premiums on an insurance policy, due to the Civil War, cancelled the policy; or whether the policy revived when the war was over. In this he found himself associated with one of the first lawyers in the United States, ex-Justice B. R. Curtis. March 17, 1874, the journal runs: "I occupied an hour and was followed for an other

hour by Judge B. R. Curtis of Boston. The first portion of my argument was not satisfactory to me, but in the latter half I think I made a forcible argument and during the whole I had the close attention of the court. On the whole I was not ashamed to be associated with so eminent a lawyer as Judge Curtis. There is a judicial calmness and equipoise in his manner of handling his mind that I admire."

Of this case he said in the 1880 interview: "I was assistant, Junior Counsel of Judge B. R. Curtis of Boston in the last case he ever argued before the Supreme Court. It was a great question on the effect of war on a life insurance policy—whether it vitiated the insurance policy of a man who lived in the South, a belligerent. We took the ground that it did; it was a question that had never been tested in the Supreme Court. It was a new question. One of the judges happened to be sick and the other eight were divided, four and four, and the case did not get a final decision. But a year later, after Judge Curtis's death another case came up involving the same point, and I was chosen by the Insurance Company (the N. Y. Life) to manage it, and I won it, the court deciding that war vitiates and renders void a policy of life insurance."

His journal throws some light upon the intensity with which he threw himself into this second case. "Nov. 6, 1874 Received a letter from New York, retaining me in two cases for the New York Life Insurance Company. I went to the clerk of the Supreme Court and entered my name in the two cases and spent most of the day in ascertaining the situation of the hostile motion about to be made by the counsel on the other side." "Nov. 7 Spent the forenoon . . . in making some further examination of the two New York Insurance cases." "Nov. 9 At ten o'clock I went to the Law Library and worked at the Insurance case No. 463 for three hours and there satisfied myself that it could not be dismissed because of informality in the record. Every case I have convinces me anew that I need a more thorough knowledge of the technical parts of the law and of case law." This second case came to trial April 26, 1876. The Court held

for the companies, but also decided, five to four, that the policies could be redeemed at the "surrender value." This, according to a footnote (p. 26, 93 U.S.), was the argument of Garfield alone, not supported by M. H. Carpenter, his fellow counsel.¹

Garfield did not let his zest in argument lead him into the error of insisting on fighting every case to the end. In the case of *Averill Paint Co. vs. Cleveland Paint Co.* he came to the conclusion that a settlement would be superior to a decision. At Cleveland, March 10, 1873, he reports: "Went to the Kennard house and took a room and worked during the day and until midnight on the Paint case, preparatory to its argument tomorrow. The case is full of difficulties and the testimony is very voluminous and conflicting. The chemical experts who have given testimony in this case are at loggerheads with each other and it is difficult to see how science can be tortured in the hands of its defenders in such a manner. On looking over the whole field I am satisfied that the rival parties ought to settle and unite their forces rather than be fighting." Before going to the court the next morning he wrote a note to his wife (March 11): "Since I wrote you last, I have been at work night and day on the Paint case. I left Dr. Robison's yesterday morning and came here so as to have more seclusion and a better opportunity to work. I worked all day yesterday, and last night until after midnight. This morning, 11 a.m. I am just starting for the Court room and take a moment to drop this line." When the case was settled out of court he admitted regret. "After all our preparation there is a prospect," he wrote (March 10), "of settlement without trial. I have no doubt that such a settlement will be better for our clients than the trial of the case, but I was in hopes that I should have an opportunity to make an argument before the court."

A little later he counseled a similar procedure in the case of *Driggs vs. Daniel*, which he accepted with regret. "Dec. 31 Took up the case of Driggs vs Daniel and read carefully analyzing the numerous papers in the case. If I were not

¹ *N. Y. Life Ins. Co. vs. Statham*, 93 U.S. 24.

engaged in this case I would decline to have anything further to do with it, for I seriously doubt whether our client has a good case. This is the first instance in my practice as a lawyer when I have come to such a conclusion in regard to my client; for I have usually declined to accompany any case where I believed the right was not on my side. I shall, however, do the best I can but I shall set up no claim that I do not think well-founded." The upshot of his studies in the case was that, on February 27, he brought about a meeting of counsel and principals in hopes of effecting a compromise, and when this failed he made a second effort. On June 9, 1874, he recorded his success.

Garfield's success in the law was creditable for a man who began his practice under such conditions and continued it in the intervals of his engrossing Congressional labors. Nearly all his most important suits he won, but he lost a number of minor ones, some of them absurdly hopeless from the start, such as one in which the citizens of Canfield, Ohio, sought to prevent the removal of the county seat of Mahoning County from Canfield to Youngstown on the ground that this would be an unconstitutional impairment of the obligation of a contract.¹

When Garfield finally decided to continue in the House, in the summer of 1876, he was in reality making a final decision against the plan of making the law his future field. Although he said nothing about it in his journal, entered no formal determination, it yet was true that after the spring of 1876 he took few new cases. The constant reference to the preparation and progress of lawsuits disappeared from his journal and to a large extent his law business died out. The explanation is obvious. No man could carry the party responsibilities that rested on him after the election of Hayes and his own assumption of the leadership of the Republican minority in the House, and expect to have time to devote to a general practice. The last important case he tried was, however, one of the most spectacular, in his eyes,

¹ *Newton vs. Board of County Commissioners of Mahoning County*, 100 U.S. 548.

involving the greatest test of his legal powers since he had first begun to plead.

"In March last," records Garfield in his journal (May 26, 1877), "I was retained by W. Butler Duncan in his suit against the Mobile and Ohio Railroad¹ and now he writes me that it is set for the first Monday in June. I dislike to make this Southern trip at this season, but it is a very large case and if I won it I should have the largest fee of my life." From Washington, where he had gone to prepare for the trial, he reported to his wife (May 29, 1877): "I spent all the hours I could use my eyes while on the cars, to read up the case and am beginning to feel my grip upon it growing strong. The fact that I am to meet the foremost lawyers of the South in their own forum is awakening me from the sleep into which I have let my mind fall since I went to Mentor. I begin to see my way through to Victory. At any rate, I mean to find one, if she have a home in Mobile."

After some further preparations in New York Garfield traveled southward June 1, in company with F. N. Bangs of New York, his associate in the case. It was the second time in a few months he had been to the South, and, as in November, 1876, the journey stirred old memories. "June 2 We passed Corinth in the evening which I had not seen since I marched my brigade out of it for Decatur ten years ago." Similarly on the return journey, a week later, he wrote, "Sun. June 10, Awoke at Franklin and saw the Lord's day sun shining still and calm upon the fields where so many brave men went down thirteen years ago in the battle between the forces of Thomas and Hood."

It is not surprising that battle memories arose in his mind, for in the lawsuit that filled the intervening week Garfield had had one of the most exciting mental contests of his life. In a letter to Hinsdale, of June 13, he gives a brief summary of the case. "You know my life has abounded in crises and difficult situations. This trip has been perhaps not a crisis but certainly has placed me in a situation of extreme difficulty. Two or three months ago, W. B. Duncan, a prominent

¹ *Duncan et al. vs. Mobile and Ohio R.R. Co.*, 8 Fed. Cases 19.

business man in New York retained me as his lawyer in a suit to be heard in the U. S. Court of Mobile, and sent me the papers in the case. I studied them and found that they involved an important and somewhat difficult question of law and I made myself sufficiently familiar with it. So when Duncan telegraphed me to be in Mobile on the 1st Monday of June I went with a pretty comfortable [feeling] of my readiness to meet anybody who should be employed on the other side.

"But when I reached Mobile I found there were two other suits connected with this and involving the ownership, sale, and conflicting rights of several parties to the Mobile and Ohio R.R. After two days skirmishing, the Court ordered the three suits to be consolidated. The question I had prepared myself on passed almost wholly out of sight and the whole entanglement of an insolvent R.R. twenty-five years old and lying across four states and costing twenty millions came upon us at once. There were seven lawyers in the cases beside me. On my side were John A. Campbell of New Orleans, late member of the Supreme Bench of the U.S., a leading N. Y. and a Mobile lawyer. Against us were Judge Hoadley of Cincinnati and several Southern men. I was assigned the duty of summing up the case for our side and answering the final argument of the opposition. All had so much better knowledge of the facts than I and all had more experience with that class of litigation. But I am very sure that no one of them did so much work in the five nights and six days of the trial as I did."

The suits thus consolidated represented various sorts of claims upon the railroad, two of them being brought by holders of the first mortgage bonds, the other, the suit for which Garfield was retained, concerning the special claims of Duncan, Sherman and Company of New York for money advanced in 1873 and 1874 in the effort to keep the railroad solvent. Garfield's journal gives additional touches to this picture of a legal crisis. When the order for the consolidation of the suits was issued Bangs, in imitation of an adjutant at dress parade, "turned to me and said 'Sir, the line is

formed; a neat reminder of dress parade and of the part he expected me to take in the battle now opening." That night Garfield worked until 2 a.m.; two days later he worked on his argument until far past midnight. He was evidently concentrating with his utmost power.

As in the debate with Denton nearly twenty years before, Garfield studied his opponents, the most formidable of whom was Hoadley, whom he had heard only four months before as counsel before the Electoral Commission. "He has more force and sustained logic than Andrews (his colleague). I suspect he has a passion for extreme positions. He seems to delight in discovering a startling and unusual view of a case. It was so in the Electoral Commission and is so in this case." Of Bangs, his colleague, he wrote with much warmth. "In many respects he is a remarkable man. He has a clear and powerful perception of points and presents them with clearness and force. I think, however, he lacks intellectual perspective." The evening before the last day Garfield wrote to his wife (June 7): "Late at night I have just read yours of the 5th. I am sitting, hard at work, with the sweat reeking from every pore. The earth and sky are an oven in which I roast. Our case has raged four full days, and I have given it about 15 hours out of each 24. I am placed at the post of most responsibility. I am to make the last speech, reviewing and closing the case. It is a new field of legal study, almost all the questions are new to me and the case is most complicated. I have all my old habitual fears of failure without you to support me."

On June 8 came the summing up, and the Congressional experience of the trained debater, added to his midnight work, carried him through. "I closed the case," he wrote, "in an argument of an hour and a half. Part of it I did quite satisfactorily. But some of my authorities I had not so fully digested as to handle them with ease and such force as satisfied me. But I believe I struck the right line of thought that had in it the essence of the case. . . . I think," he added, "we shall win our case." In the letter to Hinsdale, of June 13, he concludes: "I am glad to tell you that I have received

a dispatch from Mobile that the Court adopted my view of the case and gave us the verdict on all points. As you may imagine I am about tired out."

In the year 1879 Garfield noted the probable revival of his legal business and undoubtedly looked forward to resuming its practice when once he was in the Senate and freed from the cares incident to leadership of the Republican party in the House. He wrote to his wife from Washington during the special session (June 15): "I have been retained in an important law case, by Mr. Watson of Ashtabula, who was Stanton's Asst. Sec. of War. He has paid me \$1000 as a retaining fee and I worked with him four hours yesterday on the case. I shall send the \$1000 to Maj. Swaim, which will pay him half my debt to him for money invested in the Silver King mine which is promising better than ever. So by degrees I am seeing our way out of debt. There remains \$1000 more to Swaim, and \$6000 on the Mentor farm. When these sums are paid I shall 'owe no man anything.'" "June 22 My class-mate Knox is here to engage me in an important series of lawsuits. I hope the revival of business has concluded to reach me. You know my law cases have dropped off heavily during the past two years so I welcome its return."

Looking over Garfield's record as a whole, it seems highly probable that he was justified in his own estimate of his powers as given in Blaine's "Eulogy."¹ Certainly his success and his resourcefulness, and still more his ability to select a sound and tenable line of argument, were above the ordinary. Nor was this power he showed in any degree analogous to his stump-speaking habits, for nearly all his cases were in the United States Supreme Court, were civil suits and did not depend for their outcome upon the emotions or sympathies of a jury. In fact, Garfield's whole interest was intellectual, not financial or "sporting." He wanted to win by sound argument based on a correct interpretation of law.

¹ See p. 699.

CHAPTER XXIII

GARFIELD, ROSECRANS AND DANA

NO American public man left more ample biographical material than Garfield. Anyone who has followed through the foregoing chapters has seen that for every step of his career, from the beginning of his diary at the age of sixteen, there is the abundant testimony of his letters, journals and official papers, such as military reports and Congressional speeches. In addition he left numerous addresses, articles or memoranda of an autobiographical character, which, taken together, supply a commentary on nearly every aspect of his life. Nevertheless, there is one phase of his career about which, in the last years of his life and still more after his death, a tradition hostile to his good name was developed and this tradition was rendered possible because of the almost complete silence which Garfield himself maintained on the subject, a silence which calls for explanation.

The main charge was that Garfield, during his service as chief of staff to Rosecrans, was guilty of grave disloyalty to his superior, by misrepresenting his conduct in letters to Secretary Chase, his crowning treachery being to secure the removal of Rosecrans after the battle of Chickamauga. A minor charge, involving less turpitude but almost fatally bad advice, was that he induced Rosecrans to fly to Chattanooga on the second day of the battle of Chickamauga, instead of returning to the field, thereby causing him to ruin his prestige and lose his command. Since these accusations were made in print during Garfield's life, without eliciting any public denial on his part, it is impossible to omit a consideration of their validity and of the reasons for his failure to deal with them.

The starting point is to be found in the difficult situation created for Garfield by the fact that it was his separation

from Rosecrans on September 20, and his return to the field while his commander went on to Chattanooga that made him a hero and won him a major general's commission, but at the same time wrecked Rosecrans's standing with the army and with the administration. All the glory for the stubborn defense went to Thomas and Granger; and Garfield, who stood by their side during the last desperate hours, shared their credit. This made it impossible for Garfield, who felt a great personal affection for Rosecrans, to dwell upon his famous ride without either criticising or justifying his chief's going to Chattanooga, and it is this which may be conjectured as the reason why, from the start, he refrained from making any public mention of that feat or even describing it in any private letter.

Rosecrans, on the other hand, seems to have begun to frame a self-justifying version of the retreat to Chattanooga as soon as the gravity of its consequences dawned upon him. C. A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, who was at Chattanooga, telegraphed to Stanton, September 27, "Although it may be said in his excuse that, under the circumstances, it was proper for the commanding general to go to his base of operations . . . still he feels that that excuse cannot entirely clear him either in his own eyes or that of the army."¹ It seems probable that some of his staff now put forward the claim that Rosecrans knew, before leaving Garfield near Rossville, that Thomas was safe, since this would supply a sound reason for his sending Garfield to the front instead of going there himself. At all events, just such a version was soon in circulation, for in a book by John Fitch, entitled *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland*, whose second preface is dated "Chattanooga, Nov. 1863," these words appeared (p. 470): "Arriving at Rossville, it was ascertained that Thomas was holding his own with prospects of keeping the enemy at bay at least until night; also that Granger's reserve had already started to his support. Thus all was well in that quarter."

Read in the light of this version, Rosecrans's official report

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 202.

of the battle, written in October, assumes a questionable aspect. In describing his retreat, he said: "Hearing the enemy's advancing musketry and cheers, I became doubtful whether the left had held its ground, and started for Rossville. On consultation and further reflection, however, I determined to send General Garfield there, while I went to Chattanooga, to give orders for the security of the pontoon bridges at Battle Creek and Bridgeport, and to make preliminary dispositions either to forward ammunition and supplies, should we hold our ground, or to withdraw the troops into good position. General Garfield dispatched me, from Rossville, that the left and center still held its ground. General Granger had gone to its support. . . . General Garfield proceeded to the front, remained there until the close of the fight, and dispatched me the triumphant defense our troops there made against the assaults of the enemy."¹

The wording of the last part of the report is peculiar, since it suggests or seems to suggest that Garfield discovered *at Rossville* that Thomas was holding his ground, and *after that* proceeded to the front. Of course Garfield's dispatch of 3:45, September 20, the one that first conveyed this news, was sent from the front and not from Rossville. In this slight equivocation lay the germ of much future sophistication. Its leaning toward the staff version is manifest.

Doubtless Garfield read this report, since he himself carried it to Washington, but its only effect upon him, if any, was to seal his lips firmly, as was shown a few months later, when, in the House of Representatives, he was compelled to undertake a public defense of Rosecrans. The occasion, already referred to in Chapter XI, was the appearance of a Senate resolution thanking Thomas and his troops for their conduct at Chickamauga, against which Garfield took the floor on February 17, 1864. Rosecrans, smarting under the humiliation of his removal, which he laid to the malignity of Stanton, had already written to Garfield asking him to defend his reputation, so that in this speech he not only expressed his own desire to shield his old com-

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 60.

mander, but endeavored to meet a positive request. As one of Garfield's few public comments on the battle it deserves quotation. After deprecating the habit of too frequent voting of thanks, he said, earnestly: "I appeal to your sense of justice, whether it be right to single out a subordinate officer, give him the thanks of Congress and pass his chief in silence? This resolution . . . meets my hearty approval for what it contains but my protest for what it does not contain. I should be recreant to my own sense of justice did I allow this omission to pass without notice."

Garfield then developed briefly the same aspect of the campaign that Rosecrans had dwelt upon in his report, namely, that since the Army of the Cumberland "gained Chattanooga" the campaign was a success. Of Chickamauga he then said this: "We have had victories—God be thanked—all along the line; but in the history of this war I know of no such battle against such numbers—40,000 against an army of not less than 75,000. After the disaster to the right wing on the bloody afternoon of September 20th, 25,000 men of the Army of the Cumberland stood and met 75,000 hurled against them; and they stood in their bloody tracks immovable and victorious when night threw its mantle around them. . . . Who commanded the Army of the Cumberland? Who organized, disciplined and led it? Who planned its campaigns? The general whose name is omitted in the resolution—Major General W. S. Rosecrans." Then he referred to the fact that Rosecrans in West Virginia won actions which led to the promotion of McClellan, and in Mississippi won battles at Iuka and Corinth, thereby aiding not only himself but Grant; he sketched the record of Rosecrans at the head of the Army of the Cumberland and pointed out that while Chattanooga was a victory it was fought with a great superiority of numbers on the Union side, while at Chickamauga the situation was reversed.

"If there is any man upon earth whom I honor," he concluded, "it is the man who is named in this resolution, General George H. Thomas . . . and I say to gentlemen here, that, if there is any man whose heart would be hurt by the

passage of this resolution as it now stands that man is General George H. Thomas. . . . I ask you then not to pain the heart of a noble man, who will be burdened with the weight of these thanks that wrong his brother officer and his superior in command. All I ask is that you will put both names into the resolution and let them stand side by side."¹

In this eloquent and effective speech, which said all that could be said in behalf of Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland, the one conspicuous omission is that of any allusion to Rosecrans's retreat to Chattanooga, or of Garfield's ride. On the single decisive point, which caused Rosecrans's downfall, he said not a word, nor did he mention his own experiences in the battle. Of this speech Cox remarks² that he "dwelt upon the admirable parts of Rosecrans' generalship and skilfully avoided the question of personal conduct on the field. He carried the House with him, but a joint resolution must pass the Senate also, and it never came to a vote in that body."

For this speech Garfield received letters of thanks from Rosecrans and from several members of his staff. "Thank you for your manly defence of your general at Chickamauga," wrote the former (March 12). "You will learn that the whole army of the Cumberland appreciated it." Major Bond, writer of the "fatal order," thanked him for his "noble defense of General Rosecrans," saying (February 29), "I am rejoiced that there is one man in Congress who dares to do justice to a man."

Meanwhile Rosecrans had had occasion to approach the subject when he was called upon to testify under oath in the three courts of inquiry which investigated the conduct of Generals Crittenden, McCook and Negley at Chickamauga. Since the chief blunder of the first two had been their leaving the field and retreating to Chattanooga at the same time that Rosecrans did, he was practically compelled to justify their behavior, or, at any rate, to abstain from criticising it. With that part of his testimony this narrative is not

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 776.

² *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. II, p. 15.

concerned, but it is interesting to observe that into it he inserted allusions to Garfield's return to the front which once more employed curiously obscure language.

On February 4, when describing his dealings with McCook on September 20, he referred to meeting him after the rout, and used these words: "About 4:30 or 5 p.m. I directed him to wait a short time until I should hear General Garfield's report from the extreme front, informing him that we held the field; that Granger had gone up from Ross-ville; that portions of his and Crittenden's corps were reported near Rossville and that the arrival of a further report from General Garfield would enable me to give more definite instructions. . . . On the arrival of that report from General Garfield I read it to him or stated its substance. . . . This was, I think about 9:30 p.m."¹ Here again we strike an ambiguity. What Rosecrans told McCook was, in fact, in Garfield's report from the "extreme front," and yet the statement seems to avoid saying so, and, read hastily, would give the impression that the information Rosecrans gave to McCook was his own knowledge, not Garfield's. Standing alone it might seem carelessness. Taken in connection with what Rosecrans was to say later it indicates a further trend toward reconstructing events in his mind.

Rosecrans was next given a command in Missouri but this brought only fresh humiliations, since he was again removed in the autumn of 1864 by Stanton, whose distrust of his capacity was inveterate, and was shown with his customary harshness and impatience. Then, on February 6, 1865, in accordance with a request from his old commander (February 2), Garfield again tried to aid him by carrying a resolution instructing the Committee on the Conduct of the War to investigate the campaigns of General Rosecrans. This gave the deeply resentful man a chance to present, on April 22, 1865, a formal defense of his record in a long written narrative, having, as usual, been put under oath. This sworn statement was published in a Congressional document

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 941.

as Rosecrans's personal version of the events of Chickamauga.

In it, with the utmost precision, Rosecrans undertook to explain and justify his retreat to Chattanooga. He said, "Forgetting my past record, and influenced by the calumnies put in circulation, it has been thought that I needlessly or languidly forsook the field of battle on the 20th." He explained that the army train was endangered by the rout of the right wing. "When, therefore," he continued, "I reached the vicinity of Rossville and became satisfied that, though cut off from the main body of our army which held the centre and left (General Thomas's) with five brigades, three of Sheridan's and two of Davis's, we still held the field in front of Thomas, two things were to be done; first to ascertain the condition of things at the front; the other to have this train moved to a place of safety. . . . Having explained this to General Garfield, my chief of staff, it was determined that the movement to the front, being less complicated, should be performed by him, while I made the dispositions and gave the orders. . . . Nor was I unmindful of the consideration that, as the security of Chattanooga was the essential thing, my duty as a commanding general required that I should look to the ground with a view to the eventuality of being driven from the field of battle."¹

In this sworn testimony, Rosecrans boldly stepped from the ambiguities of his official report of 1863 and adopted the version first printed in Fitch's book two years before. He now asserted that when he separated from Garfield he knew that Thomas held the field, and that Garfield was sent to the front because it was a less difficult and "complicated" task than that of issuing orders to secure the safety of the train. Two years later one of his staff, Colonel Goddard, the adjutant general, expanded this version still further in a letter which was printed in March, 1867, in a New York paper. It said of Rosecrans that "falling in with Gen. Garfield at or near Rossville, and getting reports from Thomas that he continued to hold his position, and knowing that the fate of

¹ Sen. Doc. No. 142, 38 Cong., 2 sess., pt. iii, p. 32.

the army depended upon our ability to hold Chattanooga; he felt it was more necessary that he should be there than that he should join Thomas, who reported himself able with the aid of Granger's reserves who had gone to his support, to hold his position. He decided to go himself to Chattanooga and send Garfield to Thomas with instructions, etc."

In this manner Rosecrans and certain of his staff had so committed themselves regarding the events of the afternoon of September 20 that it was impossible for Garfield to say anything about his own doings on that occasion without either contradicting his old commander, or accepting a version of things which rendered his own return to the front an unimportant minor episode, a carrying of orders after the battle was virtually over. Although there is not a word from Garfield to support the conclusion, it may still be confidently affirmed that we find here the explanation of his complete silence on what, under other circumstances, would have been a natural subject for his tongue and pen. The evidence in support of this theory is mainly negative, but it all points in the same direction.

To begin with, there is the proof that Garfield entertained the kindest feelings for his old commander. This comes out in the letters which the two interchanged from 1863 to 1880, all hearty and intimate in tone. In November, 1865, Garfield called upon Rosecrans and his wife, who were staying in New York, and reported "a good visit" (November 2). In 1868 Rosecrans went to California, which he made his home henceforward, and the scene of sundry mining investments and speculations. He reported his prospects to Garfield and suggested that he might aid him, but his letters show that he was very sensitive when Garfield did not answer promptly and was inclined to query the continuance of his friendship.

When Grant was nominated Rosecrans was much concerned over his own relations with Garfield, since he loathed Grant—"that little puppy Grant," he called him in one letter (November 16, 1867)—and disliked to see Garfield supporting him. The two men met when Rosecrans came east this year, Garfield expressing the heartiest feelings in his

letters; but the older man feared their political difference might prove a barrier. "You know I always take a very lively interest in your future," he wrote (November 9), "and really flatter myself that political differences, even great ones, and political ambition will not be able to deprive us of a friendship, cemented by a service which, if any, creates the most durable attachments. . . . I only want to know if you will stand by me and if I may count on your friendship as heretofore." Garfield reassured him with tireless patience and Rosecrans departed to his mining ventures.

In 1869, when Rosecrans was nominated for governor of Ohio by the Democrats, Garfield was dismayed by the possibility of having to oppose his old commander on the stump. He wrote to Cox (July 19): "Will Rosecrans accept the nomination? I am sure that nothing but his personal feud with the President will induce him to do so. Rosecrans is as intense in that as in everything else and pushes his hostility to a most unreasonable extent. If he accepts, it will make my part in the campaign an uncomfortable one." To General D. S. Stanley, his old army colleague, he wrote (July 21), "Our poor old Rosy seems likely to be caught in the Democratic trap, though I have some hope he may have the wisdom to spurn their platform and make them ashamed of their attempt to disgrace him." Fortunately for his peace of mind, Rosecrans did not accept the nomination.

A little later Rosecrans was again showing sensitiveness. "If I thought your failure to answer my note was due to anything except negligence," he wrote (March 14, 1870), "I would end our friendship and forget the past." So Garfield had again to soothe him. "I beg you not for a moment to believe that I have lost my affectionate regard for you," he said (March 17, 1870), and again, "Be assured that my heart is in its old place."

It was before this sensitive and self-conscious man that Garfield was invited to deliver, on November 24 of that same year, a memorial oration on the life and character of General Thomas at the annual meeting of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland at Cleveland. Rosecrans was president of

the society and had come on from the Pacific coast to preside on this occasion. Thus Garfield was compelled to step directly into the dangerous territory, for it would be necessary to refer to Chickamauga, one of Thomas's highest titles to fame, and to do it in the presence of the general whose fall from command was the direct result of the circumstances that won for Thomas his glory.

The oration proved to be one of Garfield's best, for it was a veritable labor of love. As delivered it must have been highly effective, when given with full oratorical power in the presence of Thomas's old associates and friends. On the background of Thomas's war record, Garfield threw into high relief a few striking points; first, a vivid picture of Thomas's remarkably impressive physical presence as indicative of his powerful personality. Then for some time he dwelt upon his refusal to follow his state, Virginia, into secession, refuting rumors that he had at one time meditated joining the Confederacy, and exalting him, in contrast to Lee, as the highest type of soldierly honor and fidelity to the Union. Next, as an illustration of Thomas's supreme strength, he dwelt with the fervor of an eyewitness upon his magnificent defense on the second day of Chickamauga. Finally, in conclusion, he skillfully mingled testimonials to Thomas's military merits, including thoughtful comparisons with Wellington and with Washington, with anecdotes showing the transparent honor and genuine personal modesty of the captain whom "no enemy was ever able to fight out of a position he undertook to hold."¹

In this oration Garfield's treatment of the battle of Chickamauga was striking for its careful avoidance of anything that could in any way jar upon the feelings of Rosecrans. To begin with, he described the military situation and the objective for which the army was fighting strictly according to the analysis in Rosecrans's official report of 1863. At times he almost paraphrased the words. Most striking of all, he omitted any mention of Rosecrans's flight to Chattanooga, of his own return to the field, or even of his own

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 643.

presence at Thomas's side during the last terrible hours of the defense. While he did not introduce any eulogy or defense of Rosecrans into an oration in honor of another general, he scrupulously abstained from anything controversial.

After the oration had been delivered Rosecrans wrote to Garfield a long letter urging him to insert statements showing that his own orders and sending of support had much to do with Thomas's success. In this letter he alluded, for the only time in their correspondence, to Garfield's return to the front. "I sent you to him," he wrote (December 10), "and left it optional with him at the last moment whether to hold the field he occupied till I could join him, or do the thing we had agreed to, retire to Rossville and yet that lying signboard put up on the battle field . . . says 'Here stood Thomas until ordered to retire.' This signboard I am told stands there now giving a lying color to history. Let your great oration smite this lie."

Garfield's answer (December 14, 1870) was tactful. "Of course it was apparent to you that in discussing the characteristics of Thomas I could not go very far away from that theme without marring the general unity of the oration, but in revising it for final printing, I will do as well as I can in the direction you suggest. I never before heard of the signboard on the battle-field. Gordon Granger will tell you that both he and I strenuously urged Thomas not to retire on Rossville, but that he had already given the order. I did not understand that your order to him was peremptory, but only discretionary and both Granger and I were exceedingly anxious to have the army remain on the ground it had so valorously held during the day. I think if we had been with Thomas when your dispatch was received the order to withdraw would not have been given."

After this Garfield seems not to have met Rosecrans again, unless in December, 1871, and their correspondence dropped until 1877. Writing in April, 1872, to Mrs. Rosecrans, who had asked him to send some documents to her husband, he closed: "You may be sure that I hold you and

yours in the kindest remembrance. My associations with the General were among the highest and most stirring of my life and I have never failed to stand by him in success and adversity." In 1875, when Garfield was in California, he made efforts to meet his old commander and called at his house, but the two missed each other.

In 1877 Rosecrans became an office seeker under the Hayes administration and wrote to Garfield (October 19, 1877) for assistance in securing "some appointment that would be suitable and beneficial such as the Superintendancy of the Branch mint." He came on to Ohio and visited Hayes, but Garfield did not meet him, although the two men almost had an encounter at a railway station. In a letter to his wife, September 17, 1877, he described himself arriving at Kenton to speak in the campaign, just before President Hayes and his party passed through. "A large concourse waited at the Depot until his train came and went. I stood within thirty feet of dear old Gen. Rosecrans as they came out on the rear platform of the President's car and spoke a few words to the crowd, but he did not see me." The impression produced from their letters is that of a genuinely kindly feeling on Garfield's part. It would be the natural thing for him to refrain absolutely from saying anything that might give pain to such a person, who was living under a shadow of past misfortune.

Nevertheless it is interesting to discover that, after the revised Rosecrans version had been put forth, Garfield took steps to have an authentic description of his ride given to the world, although without his name being used as authority. The proof is found in a confidential letter (of March 7, 1867) in the Garfield files from Henry Mills Alden (Williams 1857), who, in collaboration with A. H. Guernsey, was writing *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*. He wrote: "After weeks of patient study I think I know something about the battle of Chickamauga and shall begin to write . . . next Monday. . . . I am much indebted to you for going over the affair with me at Williams last summer. You gave me a *picture* of the battle, or the outlines for a

picture which I have missed elsewhere. I wish to be fortified in one point: Did I not understand from you that when you, with General R. were leaving the right, the General had no idea that Thomas was holding his ground or could hold it? If I remember rightly you said that on your way to Rossville the question arose as to whether firing heard by both of you on Thomas' line was the firing of an army disorganized and in retreat, or of an army holding its position; and that you thought it the latter. Rosecrans differed from you having evidently reached a settled *conviction* of the rout of the whole army. Do I remember rightly? I ask because Rosecrans explicitly states in his evidence before the Congressional Committee that he was 'satisfied that we still held the field in front of Thomas.' The time and place are the same referred to by you, viz when you both reached Rossville. He states moreover that it was determined between you 'that the movement to the front being less complicated' you should go to Thomas while he looked after the rear. On the contrary I believe you told me that you begged his permission to go to Thomas. This is important. I will not use your name in this connection as my authority but I want to tell the exact truth, and no man knows so well as you where the truth here is. Therefore I wish to be assured that my memory of our conversation serves me right."

Garfield's reply has not been preserved, but the internal evidence, on pages 548 and 549 of the *Pictorial History of the War*, shows beyond doubt that he confirmed the correctness of Alden's recollections of their conversation at Williamstown in 1866. These pages repeated not only the facts as set forth in the letter but used some of the same words. The important sentences in it run as follows: "Rosecrans and Garfield, his chief of staff, left the field together, taking the Rossville road. . . . As far as the eye could reach there was no orderly array of battle and no direct communication with the left. Was Thomas beaten also? This was the question which now agitated the minds of the general and his staff officer. If he was routed then clearly Rosecrans' place was at Chattanooga, where he could best provide for the

safety of his army and of his trains. Finally the two officers, before reaching Rossville, came to a point where two roads led, one to Chattanooga and the other around to Thomas' position. Firing could be heard in the latter direction with considerable distinctness. Apart from this firing there was no hint to guide General Rosecrans. The two officers listened most intently and reached exactly opposite conclusions. Rosecrans had already arrived at a conviction that his entire army was defeated. He judged that the firing which he heard was scattered and indicated disorganization. Garfield, who doubtless had the more correct ear, thought it was the firing of men who were standing their ground. He felt that Thomas was not beaten and as General Rosecrans was determined himself to go to Chattanooga, he asked permission to go to Thomas. This was given."

On the next page follow some sentences which may be actually quoted from Garfield, since they purport to describe his emotions on arriving at the Snodgrass house. "It was to him a glorious moment. He alone of all the army which then held the field, had witnessed the advance of Hood's irresistible column and the wreck of a whole line of battle; and he alone, of all those who had left the field, was permitted to witness the magnificent spectacle of Longstreet's repulse from the ridge. It was the fulfilment of the promise which his own heart had whispered to itself when he parted company with Rosecrans near Rossville." These words are not in the ordinary analytical style of the narrative. They strongly suggest the somewhat emotional literary manner which Garfield used in writing about the war at that time. They read like a quotation.

It is interesting to see that in all this no mention is made of the Rosecrans story of 1865, although Alden's narrative was in square contradiction. Still more striking is a footnote on page 549, evidently written by Alden in his abrupt, emphatic style, which demolishes not Rosecrans's testimony but Goddard's letter, above referred to, and in so doing uses information that could have come only from Garfield. "There is a general misapprehension," it runs, "in regard to

this ride of Garfield's to the front, caused probably by the publication of explanatory letters from sources which *ought* to be authentic but which are not so." Taking up in detail the assertions of Goddard, it says: "This member of Rosecrans' staff knew absolutely nothing of what he relates as to this matter. He makes Rosecrans 'fall in' with Garfield at or near Rossville, whereas it was at this very point that Garfield parted with Rosecrans, after having been with him all the time from the beginning of the battle on the 19th. By a still wider error he makes Rosecrans receive reports at this point that Thomas continued to hold his position. Rosecrans received no such reports. Neither Garfield nor Rosecrans had anything to guide them in their conduct at this time save their own inferences. . . . Again Rosecrans is made to send Thomas orders by Garfield 'to hold his position at all hazards until nightfall and then to retire to Rossville.' Rosecrans sent *no* order to Thomas by Garfield. A dispatch was sent later in the day." Alden then quoted Rosecrans's official report of the battle to show that he then feared that Thomas had *not* held his ground, and concluded: "The simple fact is that Rosecrans made a great mistake. He arrived too soon at the conviction that his whole army was defeated and upon that conviction he went to Chattanooga, because he deemed it his duty to do so. The charges of cowardice or of an apathetic abandonment of the field are too ridiculous to be even mentioned. Rosecrans was a general against whose bravery or patriotism there can rest no reproach."

It is a safe surmise that within these paragraphs is to be found Garfield's personal version of the separation from Rosecrans and the ride to Thomas. What strengthens this belief is the studious avoidance by Alden of any mention of Rosecrans's 1865 statement, except as it is hinted at in the last sentences quoted above. Garfield evidently impressed upon Alden that there was to be no controversy with Rosecrans, no refutation of his statements by name. It is also likely that he supplied Whitelaw Reid with material for the biographical sketch published in 1868 in *Ohio in the War*.

Reid quoted Rosecrans as "sending Garfield," then added:¹ "Such were the statements of the report, and in a technical sense they were true. It should not be forgotten, however, in Garfield's praise, that it was on his own earnest representation that he was sent—that, in fact, he rather procured permission to go to Thomas and so back to the battle, than received orders to do so."

In this way Garfield, by 1868, had enabled two friends to publish in their respective works accounts of his ride which squarely contradicted the version that Rosecrans had put forth in 1865. Any student of the war, any person seeking to discover the facts, could find, in these conspicuous volumes, all that was necessary to counteract the so-called testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, and there is evidence that most of the writers of military history during the next decade followed Alden rather than Rosecrans. One wonders what Rosecrans thought of the Alden narrative, but, however unwelcome he may have found its conclusions, he does not seem to have entered upon any public vindication or controversy.

On his part Garfield seems to have rested content with the Alden publication for the rest of his life and to have practiced a rigid and systematic abstention from any personal utterance that would touch upon the sore point. A search of Garfield's letters and speeches in the years from 1870 to 1880 discloses not infrequent references to Chickamauga, but never any mention of the ride or the separation at Rossville. In 1873 (June 5), at the request of the War Department, he wrote out a history of his military record, in which he gave a chronological summary of the ranks held, orders received and duties undertaken, from Governor Denison's letter offering him a commission in 1861 to his resignation and final settlement of accounts in 1863. More than one-third of the scanty space was devoted to the Sandy Valley campaign. Of his services as chief of staff he gave but the barest sketch. He mentioned the Bureau of Military Information, under Swaim; the report to Rosecrans analyz-

¹ Vol. I, p. 757.

ing the replies of the generals in June, 1863, and the fact that he "wrote every order save one from the Army headquarters during the two days of the Battle of Chickamauga." He printed in full Rosecrans's letter of instructions when he departed for Washington with the official reports, but recorded not one thing about his personal experiences. He mentioned that he received the rank of major general "for gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of Chickamauga, to take rank from the 19th day of September, 1863," but he made no mention whatever of the "meritorious services" which were the reason for this high honor.

Two years later he transmitted to the War Department a collection of the military papers in his possession, the list showing that practically everything relating to his service as chief of staff had been preserved, including the dispatches connected with his return to the front on September 20. In his letter of transmission he said (December 8, 1875): "These books and papers I prize very highly and desire you to return them to me when they are copied. I doubt if any other complete file of these orders is in existence as they were sent to so many different officers and may have been lost in the hurry and excitement of battles." The War Department, having taken copies, sent the originals back and they are now in the Mentor collection. All of them were eventually printed in the War of Rebellion series, but not in Garfield's lifetime. They form the basis for the record of orders in Volume XXX, parts i and iii.

In his letters, so far as preserved, Garfield seems to have maintained the same scrupulous reticence, although he wrote freely on some other aspects of the campaign and battle. In 1876 Garfield was directly asked to express himself on the subject of his ride by his friend, General Emerson Opdyke, who wrote asking information as to the numbers in Rosecrans's army and adding: "I have understood that soon after your heroic return from Rosecrans to the field you learned that Thomas had peremptory orders to retire. Is that correct? . . . I will make no use of anything you communicate that would be at all disagreeable to you. Rose-

crans' conduct was shameful—yours heroic and splendid.” (January 19, 1876) Garfield's reply dealt only with his recent speech against Hill, but Opdyke was not to be put off and returned to the charge February 5, again requesting the numbers and continuing: “I understood from you that the order Genl. Thomas received was considered by him peremptory to retire and that, had you received the order before Thomas got it you would have torn it up, gotten forward the troops from the rear and held your position and that Bragg commenced a retreat. Please let me know. . . . I have been asked by the *Times* to prepare a full account of that battle. I should want details of the dramatic scene of the chief of staff urging Rosecrans to stop running away and return to his army and the final separation and your joining us in the battle. . . . I cannot excuse Rosecrans but it would be all on my own shoulders.”

Garfield declined to commit himself on the “dramatic scene,” and in his answer of February 19, 1876, contented himself with furnishing the figures for Rosecrans's army and correcting Opdyke's language in one respect. “I did not say that I should have torn up the order of General Rosecrans to Thomas if it had come to me first, but I say now and said at the time, that if I had received it first I should not have felt myself bound to treat it as a peremptory order to retire on Rossville. I believed then and I believe now that when the enemy fell back from their last attack upon us Sunday evening they were fully repulsed. They did not attempt to attack us at all the next day, nor did we even see their cavalry pickets until Monday noon.”

When, in 1880, the campaign biographers descended upon him at Mentor, demanding material to stir popular enthusiasm, Garfield continued his refusal to say anything for quotation on the battle, for none of the lives betray any knowledge beyond what was already in print, except that Garfield's old companion on the ride, Colonel W. B. Gaw of Thomas's staff, seems to have furnished two of them, Balch and Gilmore, with descriptive matter which both used.¹ As

¹ “Edmund Kirke” (i.e., J. A. Gilmore), *Life of James A. Garfield*, pp. 22-23, and W. R. Balch, *From the Tow-Path to the White-House*, p. 238.

given by Gilmore, on Gaw's authority, the separation between Rosecrans and Garfield took place much as in the Alden narrative, so far as the difference between the two men over the significance of the firing heard behind the hills is concerned, but he makes it occur on the battlefield and not near Rossville, and the narrative is so full of inaccuracies as to make it certain that Garfield himself contributed nothing.

So far as can be discovered, Garfield went to his grave without ever publishing anything over his own name on the subject, without ever describing it in any letter that has been preserved and without permitting anyone to quote him as authority for a version of the affair. Doubtless he talked to his friends, in private, but none of them betrayed his confidence during his lifetime. His record was that of a flawless considerateness. The protection of his own record he was content to leave to others, after having taken care that there should be one accurate statement in print, in *Harper's Pictorial History*.

There is no reason to suppose that this kindly attitude on Garfield's part might not have kept the friendship between the two men unbroken, had it not been that a third element entered into the situation. This was the bitter personal hostility which broke out on the part of C. A. Dana toward Garfield and led him, in 1874, to do his utmost to defeat Garfield's reelection in the Congressional campaign of that year, already described in Chapter XV. As part of his general assault on Garfield's record, he published the following accusation.

"It was Gen. Garfield himself who procured the removal of Gen. Rosecrans as commander of the Army of the Cumberland. After the disastrous battle of Chickamauga and during the long period of privation which the Army of the Cumberland endured, while shut up in Chattanooga, Mr. Dana, in compliance with his instructions, daily and faithfully reported the facts at Washington. These facts certainly indicated that Gen. Rosecrans ought to be removed and a more efficient officer put in his place; but Mr. Stanton was very slow to act against a commander who had re-

peatedly and loudly accused him of personal hostility and the caution of Mr. Lincoln was exercised in this case as in every other.

"What finally caused the removal of Rosecrans was a private letter written by Gen. Garfield to Secretary Chase who had always been a zealous friend and supporter of Rosecrans in the cabinet. The representations not only agreed with all that had reached the Administration from other quarters but were such as to convince Mr. Lincoln that Rosecrans must be removed without delay. It was upon this letter of Garfield's that the President acted. . . . These facts we believe have never before been made public."

Richard Smith, editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, wrote (September 27) asking Garfield what the significance was of Dana's charges. Garfield replied, with the mingled anger and contempt that Dana seemed to excite in him (October 5, 1874): "The article from the *Sun* on Rosecrans removal is of a piece with his [*i.e.*, Dana's] false and slanderous life. It is a lie out of whole cloth that I ever recommended the removal of Rosecrans. On the contrary, soon after I entered Congress and within six months after the Battle of Chickamauga, I attacked and defeated a resolution offered in the House thanking Gen. Thomas for his share in the battle of Chickamauga, but drawn in such terms as to exclude Rosecrans from any share in the honor. The officers of the Army of the Cumberland including Gen. Thomas himself, felt that the removal of Rosecrans was unkind and uncalled for and it was the general impression that Dana, who had been about Headquarters and enjoyed the hospitality of Rosecrans and had appeared friendly to him, was slandering the man whose bread he was eating."

As Rosecrans was at this time living in California it is probable he knew nothing of this charge. At any rate, there is no sign that he ever consulted Garfield about it. But five years later, on November 26, 1879, Dana again repeated the accusation in connection with a newspaper article by General Steedman purporting to quote him, Dana, as having threatened in 1863 "that Rosecrans' head would fall into

the basket as soon as he reached Washington." In exculpating himself, Dana over his own initials said, speaking of himself in the third person: "He never had any quarrel with Gen. Rosecrans and never made any threats respecting him. Neither is it true, as has sometimes been stated, that Rosecrans was removed on account of facts alleged in the reports which the Assistant Secretary constantly sent to Washington. He carefully informed the Administration of all that happened at Chattanooga without recommending any course of action; but it was not until the situation exhibited in his reports was emphatically illustrated by a private communication which Gen. J. A. Garfield, Chief of Staff to Rosecrans addressed to Secretary Chase that the Administration resolved to act decisively upon the subject."

This time the charge was brought to the ears of Rosecrans and he wrote to Garfield, December 20, 1879, a letter showing his customary mixture of friendliness with suspicion. "A friend sent me a slip from the *N. Y. Sun* in which C. A. D. traduces me in his accustomed way. He also says that Garfield's letter to Chase was what decided the Government on relieving me from the command. Now you with more propriety than any one could answer C. A. D. and an answer telling the very truth would be in the interest of history. I wish you would write me what there was in your letter to Chase to which he alludes. It is due to your high position that nothing should taint that chivalrous loyalty to friendship which is the acknowledged touchstone of a high nature as well as of a first-class man. I never suspected yours towards me, even when I thought you compromised with, instead of opposing Stanton's course towards me."

This letter came while Garfield was in the midst of his senatorial campaign. As soon as that was over he again wrote to reassure the sensitive and suspicious man (January 17, 1880): "I have tried for some time to get hold of the article in the *New York Sun* to which you refer and have not been able to do so. I have been told its substance by two or three persons who have seen it. I can only say, in absence of the article itself, that any charge, whether it comes from

Dana or any other liar, to the effect that I was in any sense untrue to you or unfaithful to our friendship, has no particle of truth in it. . . . If you will send me Dana's article, or if I can find a copy of it, I will if you think best, write and publish a reply.

"It is true that I was an occasional correspondent of Secretary Chase. Several times, while I was your chief of staff, he wrote me in regard to the progress of the war and asked my opinions on various questions connected with it, but I fearlessly challenge all the rascals in the world to publish any such letters written by me. They are welcome to all the capital they can make out of them. With kindest regards I am as ever your friend."

Rosecrans replied (February 3, 1880): "After what your letter says no more is necessary to satisfy me that your honor and loyalty to your chief and friend have been beyond question. But some of your old friends and comrades in arms might be misled by Dana's statement." He then suggested that Garfield should write a full reply, including an account of his interview with Thomas when the latter asked him to transmit a message to Rosecrans regarding plots against him. "Such a statement would be a most effective demonstration of your position and sentiments." It is greatly to be deplored that Garfield did not do as Rosecrans suggested, but with his lifelong habit of making no public reply to slanders it is easily to be seen why he did not. He had satisfied Rosecrans and was content to let the matter rest.

Up to 1880 Dana's effort to poison Rosecrans's mind against Garfield seems not to have produced its desired effect, but in the presidential year some instability or weakness in Rosecrans's make-up led him into a step which produced bitter results. Rosecrans accepted a Democratic nomination for Congress in California at the time when Garfield was running for President on the Republican ticket. In the heat of the campaign Rosecrans was challenged to show how he could consistently oppose a man to whom, eighteen years before, he had paid the highest compliments. Instead of making the perfectly proper answer that he was

opposing Garfield on his political views and not on his personal character, he made the blunder of publishing the following card.

"Editors *Alta* I did not expect that you would attempt to cast a slur upon my good name before your readers, for having in 1863 praised General Garfield in a special Departmental order, Army of the Cumberland, for what he deserved as Chief of Staff, and seventeen years afterward, while presiding at a public meeting, listening in silence to an attack upon his subsequent character as a member of Congress, politician and man, made, as has been unjustly stated, in a coarse and brutal manner. Seventeen years is a long period, and many a splendid young man in less time, has descended from honor to infamy, and mortified admiring friends, all Christian gentlemen, by being put in the penitentiary. I trust therefore, that you will repair the injustice done me in this article I refer to, by publishing this and saying 'the public will not certainly expect Gen. Rosecrans, as Chairman of a public meeting, to interfere with the free discussion of public and political characters, because seventeen years ago he had occasion to speak highly of the same persons.'"

In addition to this a number of newspaper reports represented Rosecrans as circulating the Morey forgery and denouncing Garfield as a "thief." After the election, however, Rosecrans cooled down and wrote Garfield a letter (December 9, 1880), admitting that he had said some rash things during the campaign, because he was irritated over "the lies" in Bundy's life, and over newspaper reports of Garfield's remarks. Wishing to let bygones be bygones he closed with this appeal, much the same one he had made several times before. "Tell me, for friendship's sake, do we stand on the old ground of cordial regard which existed between us before the election and which began in that fraternity of patriotism with which you were admitted to my military family, and even to my own quarters in the winter of 1862-3?"

On December 28 Garfield wrote the following reply in

which, after quoting Rosecrans's rhetorical appeal, he went on: "In answer I have to say that before I had heard of any word, spoken or published by partisans on either side, to disturb my friendship of many years, there appeared in the *Alta, Californian* of August 18th a card purporting to be signed by you in which occurs the following." Garfield then quoted the language of Rosecrans's communication above given and resumed, "This card with its wicked and unjust implication was widely circulated as your opinion of me, and is an insuperable barrier to the restoration of our old relations."

This is the only such letter in all Garfield's files and it is a painful one to read, for in it Garfield evidently reveals his grief and sense of injustice over a blow from a man whom he had befriended and protected. Yet if Rosecrans had had the manliness to admit his blunder and express regret, there can be no doubt that Garfield would have extended full forgiveness, for no man was less inclined to foster a grudge than he. Unfortunately Rosecrans, with unexampled stupidity, in reply (January 9, 1881) refused to admit the slightest impropriety in his language and declined to consider it even a mistake, intimating that he would not stoop for favors, even though Garfield was the President elect. This made matters hopeless. Their relations and correspondence came to an absolute stop.

The next development in the situation came a little over a year later after Garfield's death and after the mourning had ceased and the eulogies had been uttered. Then Dana, in the *New York Sun*, suddenly returned to his attack upon Garfield's military record by publishing (March 8, 1882) the hitherto unknown letter of July 27, 1863, to Chase in which Garfield expressed his bitter disappointment over Rosecrans's slowness, besides narrating how he had done his utmost to induce him to move at the time of the Tullahoma campaign through his review of the opinions of the generals (see Chapter IX). This revelation that his own chief of staff had criticised him in this manner stirred Rosecrans, still sore over his severe rebuff by his late friend, to the liveliest

anger. To reporters he heatedly denounced it as "a piece of the blackest treachery." "I had no idea," he declared, "that I was harboring a person capable of such falseness and double-dealing or there would have been a court martial at once." He called the letter "a compound of untruths and exaggerations."

A newspaper controversy was stirred up by this publication, some writers doubting the authenticity of the letter, others justifying it as wholly proper. Dana, while not failing to point to the letter as a further proof of Garfield's weakness and treachery, took occasion to reassert his charge that he had caused Rosecrans's removal.¹ "As we have repeatedly had occasion to aver, that event was not brought about by this letter, but by another, or by others, written from Chattanooga in October, 1863, but addressed, as this one was, to Chase. The existence of such a letter or letters and the fact that it was the contents thereof which finally determined President Lincoln to remove Rosecrans was stated as we believe, by Mr. Lincoln to the Honorable Montgomery Blair, in the month of November, 1863, and as we know, was stated by Mr. Stanton, to Mr. C. A. Dana in the month of December. Thus it was that Garfield, without revealing to Rosecrans that he was in any way dissatisfied, or without informing him that he was communicating to members of the cabinet, actually gave points and facts calculated to bring about the removal and disgrace of the man who most entirely trusted him."

The *Sun* next published a considerable number of wartime letters from Garfield to Chase, but among them nothing appeared which resembled the supposed guilty letter. In fact, when appealed to by Rosecrans himself, Dana admitted, in a letter not made public until 1903, that while he was sure there was such a letter he knew nothing of its contents. "The fact," he wrote,² "that it was Garfield's letter to Chase which finally broke the camel's back and made even Chase consent to Rosecrans' removal, I had from Mr. Stan-

¹ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1903, p. 94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

ton. All I know of Garfield's letter is what Mr. Stanton told me; I never saw it—do not know where it is, and suppose it to have been destroyed by Mr. Chase to whom it was privately written. Of its contents I have never known anything, except as I have stated. But my impression has always been, that without suggesting or urging the removal of Rosecrans, the letter showed a state of facts at Chattanooga, which in the opinion of Mr. Lincoln and all the rest, including Mr. Chase, the special supporter of Rosecrans, made it desirable to have Grant there. In that way, I suppose, Garfield brought about the removal of his chief. I know from Mr. Stanton and I think from Mr. Chase too, that it was a private letter of Garfield's to Chase that determined the removal of Rosecrans. Of course it was never filed in the War Department."

A striking difference is apparent between the contents ascribed to the guilty letter in the above communication and the editorials in the *Sun*, where Dana flatly stated that Garfield "gave points calculated to bring about the removal and disgrace of the man who most entirely trusted him." In writing to Rosecrans, Dana plainly said that Garfield did not suggest or urge the removal, and admitted that he knew nothing except from a conversation alleged to have taken place seventeen years before. It was a letter concerned with "the state of facts at Chattanooga."

Rosecrans also secured two other versions of the story, each different from Dana's and from each other. Montgomery Blair, August 21, 1880, informed Rosecrans that Lincoln decided on the removal after Garfield, in personal conversation, had confirmed the statement "that General Rosecrans had fled from the field during the battle of Chickamauga and that the confidence of the army in him had been broken if not destroyed."¹ This conversation, he said, took place after Garfield's arrival at Washington. Of this it is to be said, that it is a wholly impossible story, since Rosecrans was superseded long before Garfield reached Washington. If Garfield said something like the above to

¹ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1903, p. 96.

Lincoln—by no means unlikely—it was only after Rosecrans's removal.

The third person quoted, and in the most detail, is J. R. Gilmore, a newspaper writer, who described at length a conversation he had with Chase on Christmas day, 1863.¹ This account represents Chase as insinuating, without a direct assertion, that Garfield was the author of a letter he received "soon after Chickamauga, from an officer under Rosecrans high in rank in whom he had great confidence, which said that after the breaking of our lines in the second day's battle the General was demoralized, panic-stricken and totally unfitted to command; in fact, that nothing but the immovable firmness of General Thomas had saved the day." This letter, Gilmore said, quoting Chase, was shown after several days to Lincoln, who was convinced by it of the necessity of placing Grant in command; it was read by Chase to a cabinet meeting, after which Stanton, backed by the cabinet, recommended the outright removal of Rosecrans and his replacement by Thomas. This Lincoln would not accept, but agreed to leave the final decision with Grant. "It was so expressed," concludes the account, "in the dispatch of the War Department which, inasmuch as it was borne to Grant *by* Stanton himself, secured the removal of Rosecrans."

This letter reads as though there were some basis of fact in it; as though Gilmore did get some "inside information" from Chase; for it seems to fit in with the action actually taken with regard to Rosecrans. But as to the contents of the alleged letter Gilmore had only his own recollections as authority, and Gilmore, as his various war narratives show, was an excessively "journalistic" and inaccurate writer. His description of Garfield's doings at Chickamauga in his campaign life is a collection of fabulous anecdotes. No statement from him as to the contents of a letter he never saw could possibly be accepted as conclusive, especially when furnished nearly twenty years afterwards. The utmost that could safely be conjectured from the statements of Dana,

¹ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1903, pp. 97-100.

Blair and Gilmore was that a tradition was afloat regarding the use of a letter of Garfield to the injury of Rosecrans after Chickamauga.

Three months after Dana had thus fully committed himself there appeared a letter from J. W. Schuckers, Chase's secretary,¹ which purported to clear up the whole matter. He explained that it was he who, in the interest of history, had given the Chase-Garfield correspondence to Dana for publication, and, while not saying so directly, he virtually contradicted Dana's story of a missing guilty letter, by saying that Chase had carefully kept all his letters from Garfield, and that the damage to Rosecrans came not from any letter written after Chickamauga, but from the letter of July 27, written before the Chickamauga campaign. Chase had kept that letter entirely secret until after that battle, when, on the advice of a friend, he sent it to Lincoln, who was still undecided whether to keep or remove Rosecrans. "It exercised upon his mind," declared Schuckers, "the effect of a casting vote and determined him to remove General Rosecrans from the command of the army. Shortly after the removal of Gen. Rosecrans, Gen. Garfield went to Washington and Mr. Chase made him acquainted with the use that had been made of his letter. Gen. Garfield approved the use, and the letter thus became an historical document of permanent importance, a part of Gen. Garfield's personal history and a part of the history of the Army of the Cumberland. . . . The influence exercised by the confidential letter was known to [all the cabinet] as well as to others."

It is clear that Schuckers's story, if correct, wholly accounted for the vague tradition of a Garfield letter being used against Rosecrans, besides completely supporting Garfield's assertion in his letter to Smith of 1874 that he never recommended the removal of Rosecrans. It also knocked the bottom out of Dana's entire accusation. Nevertheless, the effect of these revelations, and especially of the printing of the July 27 letter, was to convince Rosecrans of Garfield's duplicity and to spur him into a series of publications in-

¹ New York *Sun*, June 10, 1882.

tended to defend himself from the criticisms in it and to reduce Garfield to his proper place.

On March 13, 1882, in the *Washington National Tribune* he put forth an account of the Tullahoma campaign, to which was prefaced an account of the circumstances leading to the questionnaire sent to the generals and to Garfield's analysis and report. According to this, Rosecrans sent the three questions to the generals in order that he might show to Halleck, by their answers, that he was not the sole obstacle to a rapid advance. The answers came in, he said, on June 17 and 18. Rosecrans told Garfield that he did not care to read them; he still held the same view, but they might be copied and sent to Washington.

Garfield then asked if he might also answer the questions. "I replied," wrote Rosecrans, "'Well, General, you know what I intend to do. You are chief of staff, I would not mind your answering the questions, but would not like you answering them in such a way as to appear the critic of the officers, nor to have it known that you had been acting in such a way.' 'Well,' he said, 'I will not. I will write it as I know your views.' So he wrote an answer, and the communications of the generals commanding were copied and with an abstract of their views forwarded to Washington. I did not understand," he added, "that Gen. Garfield's letter accompanied them." The movement then began June 22. Garfield's much-praised report on the replies of the generals was reduced by this narrative to a trifling exhibition of impertinent scribbling on his part—wholly gratuitous—and his strictures to Chase on Rosecrans's delays were shown to be untrue, since there had been no delay caused by the generals' opinions.

Having dealt with this matter, Rosecrans turned once more to the episode of the retreat to Chattanooga and again described it in such wise as to render Garfield's ride to the front wholly insignificant. In addition he now tried to show that Garfield had compelled him, Rosecrans, to go to Chattanooga, since he, although chief of staff, felt incompetent to issue the important orders. To emphasize things, Rose-

crans couched this new version in dialogue form, something that could safely be attempted since Garfield was in his grave. When the retreating group were near Rossville, the account ran, Rosecrans said to Garfield, "By the sound of battle we hold our own under Thomas," and he then enumerated the many important orders to be issued, as well as orders to be delivered to Thomas at the front. "General Garfield when asked if he could not deliver these orders, urged that there were so many orders he thought the General Commanding had better give them and send him to General Thomas. . . . 'I can go to General Thomas,' he said, 'much better than I can give these orders.' General Rosecrans said, 'Well, go and tell General Thomas my precautions to hold the Dry Valley Road and secure our commissary stores and artillery and to report the situation to me and to use his discretion as to continuing the fight on the ground we occupy at the close of the afternoon or retiring to a position near Rossville.' . . . General Garfield had further urged as a reason for General Rosecrans going to Chattanooga that a new line should be selected in advance in case the army was obliged to fall back to that point, and this should be done by the commanding General himself and that the officer in supreme command should be on the ground to assign the various command to their position."¹

This supposedly verbatim account of a conversation carried on over eighteen years before became Rosecrans's fixed version of the affair, was repeated by him on various occasions in the following years and was published in the *Century Magazine* for May, 1887, in a brief summary of the Chickamauga campaign which he furnished to the Civil War series which that periodical was printing. In this article (p. 134) he added that the important orders were sent upon his arrival. "I dispatched my orders by messenger to Mitchell and Post, gave them in person to Spear and Wagner and awaited Garfield's report." It is interesting to find that Major F. W. Bond, of Rosecrans's staff, writing to him (November 28, 1888) a letter on this subject, rehearsed,

¹ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1903, p. 87.

almost in Rosecrans's own words, the alleged dialogue with Garfield, including the opening statement that the "sound of battle showed General Thomas' position was maintained" and crediting Rosecrans with saying to Garfield as they separated, "He has nine out of fourteen divisions of the army and will undoubtedly continue to hold his present position until nightfall."¹

In view of the fact that this form of the story made its first appearance among Rosecrans's staff officers, and that in its successive developments its only support came from members of his staff, one is inclined to credit Major Bond with no inconsiderable influence on the legend, especially since he furnished to the utterly uncritical Gilmore virtually the same story, which the latter printed in 1895 in *McClure's Magazine*.² It is quite possible that Rosecrans took what was furnished him by a zealous subordinate and made it his own.

The effect of these utterances was felt by writers on military history after 1882, for it seemed only generous to give credit to Rosecrans's narratives, as they put his conduct in the most favorable light. At the end of the decade, however, a new factor entered the situation, for the publication of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* had finally reached, in its slow progress, the campaigns of 1863, and Garfield's and Rosecrans's statements could now be tested in the light of contemporary reports, dispatches and correspondence. The result, to speak plainly, was disastrous to Rosecrans's credibility.

First, in 1889, came Volume XXIII, containing the official documents relating to the Tullahoma campaign, which proved that Rosecrans, in his anxiety to show that neither the opinions of the generals nor Garfield's report and refutation had had any effect upon him, had twisted the chronology and misstated his own attitude. The replies of the generals, instead of being handed in to him June 17 and 18,

¹ *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, Vol. VIII, p. 262.

² "Garfield's Ride at Chickamauga," September, 1895, Vol. V, p. 357.

were in his hands on June 10 and 11. Instead of his not looking at them there is a dispatch from him to Halleck, dated June 11, in which he referred to the reasons given by the generals for opposing an advance, gave the numerical status of their views and quoted their opinions as a justification for his refusal to move.¹ So far from being merely written out to send with the generals' replies to Washington, Garfield's paper was an earnest plea with his superior and an argument for an advance. And Rosecrans did postpone his movement for nearly two weeks after receiving the generals' replies, during which he was subjected to extreme pressure from the War Department. His whole statement of 1882 was proved to be imaginary and the reported dialogue with Garfield utterly impossible.²

Next and more important came the four large volumes on the Chickamauga campaign, in 1890.³ These also proved the falsity of the Rosecrans versions of the reasons for the retreat to Chattanooga. To begin with, all the evidence showed that nobody among those who had been driven on the right wing had any idea what had happened to the part of the army under Thomas until two hours after Rosecrans left Garfield near Rossville. The officers who testified under oath in the Crittenden, McCook and Negley Courts of Inquiry in the winter of 1864 all swore to that effect. Furthermore, Rosecrans's own dispatches from Chattanooga, that afternoon, annihilated his claim that he knew Thomas was holding his own and the outcome of the battle was settled. At 4 p.m. he sent to Garfield a dispatch telling him to see McCook and Granger, and closing, "Should General Thomas be retiring in order, tell him to resist the enemy's advance, retiring on Rossville tonight." At 4:15 he sent another to Thomas himself, telling him to "assume command of all the forces and . . . take a strong position and assume a threatening attitude at Rossville."

At 5 p.m. after he had received Garfield's 3:45 dispatch

¹ See p. 300, above.

² *Official Records*, Vol. XXIII, pt. i, pp. 8-10.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pts. i-iv.

from the front describing the furious fighting still going on, he telegraphed to Halleck. "We have met a serious disaster. . . . Enemy overwhelmed us, drove our right, pierced our center and scattered troops there. Thomas who had seven divisions remained intact at last news." Some time after this he acknowledged Garfield's message, closing, "I trust General Thomas has been able to hold his position." The man who sent these dispatches did not know, before "sending" Garfield to the front that "we held the field in front of Thomas" (1865 version). Still further, it appeared that no orders whatever were sent to Thomas through Garfield, although such orders were described in detail in 1882.

It is a striking fact, also, that practically none of the orders whose vital importance compelled Rosecrans to go to Chattanooga appear to have been given until late that evening or the next morning, in spite of his assertion to the contrary. The only dispatch to the cavalry, dated 7:15 in the evening, says nothing about the trains. All that Rosecrans seems to have done, so far as the *Official Records* go, was to send two general orders to Thomas and wait until hearing from Garfield, after which he busied himself in telegraphing to Halleck and Burnside. It is strongly suggested that all his supposed solicitude for trains, bridges, etc., which figured so largely in the successive versions was a pure afterthought.

It is, of course, perfectly possible that Garfield, in his fighting temper, declared a preference for returning to the front, rather than aiding in issuing orders at Chattanooga. There may be some grain of truth underlying that part of the story. But it is quite as likely that the whole thing was an invention of Rosecrans's perverted memory. He had brooded over that episode until it had become an obsession.

In addition to this evidence, the years after 1890 saw a number of writers break silence and directly cite Garfield as authority for a version agreeing with that of Alden in 1867. Hay and Nicolay gave¹ a version identical with

¹ *Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. VIII, p. 102.

Alden's, and added, in a footnote, "The writers had this statement from General Garfield himself."

Another who wrote on this point with much detail was Henry Villard, who gave in his autobiography his experiences at Chattanooga after the battle, as a reporter for the New York *Tribune*. "General Garfield," he wrote,¹ "knowing that he was safe with me, took me freely into his confidence. He told me how fully convinced he was that his chief was making a mortal mistake in going to Chattanooga, how he tried to dissuade him from it, and how relieved he was to be permitted to rejoin Thomas." In a somewhat detailed study of Chickamauga, incorporated in the autobiography, Villard told the story of the separation near Rossville on the twentieth in the form found in the Alden version, adding, after describing Garfield's ride, "I heard the story from his own lips in Chattanooga, a fortnight after the battle." As to Rosecrans, Villard found him "nervous, irresolute, with little courage . . . left."²

Still further J. D. Cox, in his *Military Reminiscences*, 1900,³ gave a detailed account of his interview with Garfield just after the latter had left the Army of the Cumberland, which, although long after the event, gains weight through Cox's coolness of temper. "We sat alone in my room," he wrote, "as Garfield described to me the scene. . . . With the conviction that nothing more could be done, mental and physical weakness seemed to overcome the general. He rode silently along, abstracted, as if he neither saw nor heard. Garfield went to him and suggested that he be allowed to try to make his way by Rossville to Thomas, the sound of whose battle seemed to indicate that he was not yet broken. Rosecrans assented listlessly and mechanically. As Garfield told it to me, he leaned forward, bringing his excited face close to mine, and his hand came heavily down upon my knee as in whispered tones he described the collapse of nerve and of will that had befallen his chief. The words burned them-

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 185.

² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³ *Military Reminiscences*, Vol. II, p. 11.

selves into my memory." This story was challenged by a group of Rosecrans's former officers, headed by General H. V. Boynton, who had constituted themselves his thick-and-thin defenders, but the weight of military opinion is wholly at one with Cox and Villard as to Rosecrans's virtual breakdown after the battle. That discussion, however, lies outside the range of the present chapter.

It remains to consider how the Dana charge fared when tested by the *Official Records*. Of course nothing in the *Records* proves that Garfield did not write a letter to Chase, but what the contents of the *Records* do show is that the person who charged him with being responsible for the removal of Rosecrans was in fact the person who did the most to bring it about—namely, Dana himself. He was present at Rosecrans's headquarters during most of the campaign, was caught in the rout on the twentieth and sent back from Chattanooga a series of confidential cipher dispatches to Stanton, his superior, who had sent him there to observe and report. This file, published at length in the *Official Records*,¹ shows that Dana, in unvarnished language, began urging the removal of Rosecrans as early as September 27, and kept it up with little respite until it actually took place on October 16. No commander ever underwent a more merciless dissection than did Rosecrans in these successive dispatches. The impression they produced upon anyone who gave them credence was that the Army of the Cumberland was doomed to destruction through his utter incompetence unless relief were sent soon. At the time Dana published his accusation against Garfield, he knew perfectly well that there were over a score of dispatches in the War Department absolutely proving his own responsibility. For mingled effrontery and mendacity this exploit is unsurpassed by anything even in Dana's record.

The final removal of Rosecrans was the decision of Grant, who, when given the option of retaining him or replacing him by Thomas, chose the latter. This is proved by the

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, pp. 182-221.

Official Records, supplemented by Grant's *Memoirs*.¹ But the decision to appoint Grant commander over Rosecrans, which is what Dana referred to, as shown by his letter on page 870, can be narrowed to a few days and brought directly to Dana. On September 27 he sent a dispatch urging the removal of McCook and Crittenden, since they were utterly discredited with the army, and adding that the respect of the officers of the army for Rosecrans had "received an irreparable blow, and that not from his abandonment of the army alone but from his faulty management on the field. . . . If it be decided to change the chief commander also," he concluded, "I would take the liberty of suggesting that some Western general of high rank and great prestige like Grant for instance would be preferable."²

This dispatch produced a sensation in the cabinet, as described in Welles's diary.³ Lincoln, after discussing it with Chase and Stanton, showed it to Seward and Welles. "It makes some but not a very satisfactory excuse for Rosecrans in whom the President has clearly lost confidence," commented Welles. Lincoln was doubtful about removing Rosecrans, but Welles urged replacing him by Thomas. "Seward thought the whole three . . . should be removed."

Two days later, September 30, Dana repeated his suggestion, saying⁴ that "several officers of prominence and worth, such as General Garfield, General Wood, and Colonel Opdyke have spontaneously waited upon me to represent the state of feeling in the army" upon McCook and Crittenden. "I learn also confidentially from these officers and others that the soldiers have lost their attachment for General Rosecrans since he failed them in the battle." Dana then went on to urge the appointment of Thomas in his place. "He refused before," he concluded, "because a battle was imminent and he unacquainted with the combinations. No such reason now exists and I presume that he would accept."

¹ *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 19.

² *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 202.

³ *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. I, p. 446.

⁴ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. i, p. 202.

To this Stanton telegraphed a reply on the same day.¹ "If Hooker's command gets safely through, all that the Army of the Cumberland can need will be a competent commander. The merits of General Thomas and the debt of gratitude the Nation owes to his valor and skill, are fully appreciated here; and I wish you to tell him so. It is not my fault that he was not in chief command months ago." This was shown to Thomas, a man of the most scrupulous honor, who instantly informed Dana that "he could not consent, to take the command held by General Rosecrans."² He was determined to give no countenance, even by silence, to anything that looked like intriguing against his commander. He likewise warned Rosecrans, through Garfield, and assured him that he would oppose any change in the command.³

In addition to these weighty dispatches of Dana, Stanton had in his possession a few brief dispatches from Rosecrans, the first ones, September 20, breathing disaster, the later ones calling for reinforcements, complaining over the lack of aid from Burnside and Grant and worrying over Confederate raids in his rear.⁴ So far as he was concerned, the campaign had evidently come to a complete standstill.

On October 3 the decision was reached to make Grant commander in the West and a dispatch was sent to him summoning him north to meet Stanton at Louisville. Rosecrans was not at once removed, it is said for fear of creating a bad effect on the Ohio state election, which took place October 13, but the option of replacing him by Thomas was left to Grant, which he accepted as described.⁵ If Chase made use of some unknown letter of Garfield to influence Lincoln, or if, as Schuckers said, he brought out the July 27 letter to turn the scale, it must have operated between the twenty-eighth and the third. To begin with, it should be said that the necessity for any such letter has not been felt by any of

¹ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, p. 946.

² T. B. Van Horne, *Life of Gen. G. H. Thomas*, p. 152.

³ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1870, p. 76.

⁴ *Official Records*, Vol. XXX, pt. iii, pp. 892, 926.

⁵ U. S. Grant, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 583.

the writers who have studied this topic with the documents before them. They consider Dana's dispatches amply sufficient. First Hay and Nicolay say:¹ "By this time the Government had become convinced that the supreme charge of the armies in Tennessee could no longer safely be left in the hands of a general so querulous and so despondent as Rosecrans had become. They did not gain this impression exclusively from his [Rosecrans's] dispatches." They then summarize Dana's telegrams through two pages, concluding, "every day Mr. Dana's reports assumed darker colors."² Dana's own biographer, General J. H. Wilson, after summarizing his dispatches and the subsequent action of the government, concludes: "When it is recalled that Lincoln himself had styled Dana 'the eyes of the government at the front' and that all of his dispatches as soon as read at the War Department were sent at once to the White House, the conclusion is irresistible that they were the actuating cause of the changes which they recommended."³

Gorham's *Stanton* is laconic on this point as on many others, but by quoting Stanton's September 30 dispatch to Dana and referring to Rosecrans's demoralized dispatches with one of Dana's merciless characterizations, it shows that it supports Nicolay and Hay.⁴ Villard, in his memoir, says plainly:⁵ "As Dana's denunciations were the only information which reached the Government from any authoritative source they proved the determining factor with Stanton and Halleck. Full credit for this riddance was claimed by Dana himself in a conversation with me some months later in Washington. The President was inclined to exercise that weak clemency towards the general which he manifested towards McClellan and other disappointing commanders but finally yielded to the 'categorical imperative' which

¹ *Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. VIII, p. 117.

² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³ J. H. Wilson, *Life of C. A. Dana*, p. 277.

⁴ G. C. Gorham, *Life of E. M. Stanton*, Vol. II, pp. 131-133.

⁵ *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 211.

Stanton on this as on other occasions was obliged to address to the executive."

As to the historic residuum beneath the stories of Schuckers, Dana, Blair and Gilmore, it may be assumed as certain that Garfield spoke the truth when he said to Smith (October 5, 1874), "it is a lie out of whole cloth that I ever recommended the removal of Rosecrans." The Schuckers version, which laid the responsibility on the July 27 letter, absolved Garfield of any such charge. So did the real Dana version, set forth in his private letter to Rosecrans, although his public version said otherwise. This may be regarded as definitely settled. But the inherent difficulty in the Schuckers story lies in the lack of any rational bearing which the July letter could have had upon the problem confronting the cabinet after Chickamauga. Garfield's criticisms in that letter were aimed solely at his commander's slowness to advance, and it is hard to see how Lincoln could have been swayed by such considerations into superseding Rosecrans. The worst that could be drawn from Garfield's language fell immeasurably short of the inferences to be drawn from any of Dana's merciless dispatches.

One cannot help being impressed by the fact that the only dispatch which Garfield is actually known to have sent to Chase at this time, bears a considerable resemblance in its contents to the alleged letter described by Dana in his private letter to Rosecrans. The telegram, dated September 23, was among the papers sent by Garfield to the War Department and returned to him after being copied. As printed officially it ran: "I answered you last night that Ludlow was wounded and a prisoner. We have inflicted heavy injury on the enemy, equal to what we have suffered. He no doubt outnumbers us two to one, but we can stand here ten days if help will then arrive. If we hold this point we shall save the campaign, which will be great gain even if we lose this army. Twenty-five thousand men should be sent to Bridgeport to secure middle Tennessee in case of disaster to us. Never been such fighting in the west. Gen. Thomas and Granger stood their tracks eight hours against the whole

rebel army. We took about two thousand. Battle not yet recommenced but expected soon. Where are Sherman and Hurlbut."¹

It would not be a violent supposition, in default of anything more definite, that this was the dispatch which turned Chase. It was certainly an alarming one, with its recognition of the possible loss of the army; and it gave praise to Thomas and Granger without mentioning Rosecrans. It corresponds almost precisely to the description given by Dana when he wrote privately to Rosecrans that "without suggesting or urging the removal of Rosecrans, the letter showed a state of facts at Chattanooga which in the opinion of Mr. Lincoln and all the rest, including Mr. Chase, made it desirable to have Grant there." But it is, of course, perfectly innocuous, and cannot be said in the remotest degree to do what Dana publicly said Garfield did, "give points and facts calculated to bring about the removal and disgrace of the man who most entirely trusted him." Its aim was to urge the administration to aid the army and support Rosecrans's request for assistance. If this is true, Dana was more nearly correct than Schuckers. It is, however, mere conjecture; its only force arising from the fact that, unlike the letter of July 27, it actually bore on the problem before the cabinet.

What impresses one in this affair is the weakness and self-deception of Rosecrans; the scrupulous carefulness of Garfield to permit nothing to be printed that should damage his old chief, coupled with his usual carelessness about his own reputation; and the combined caution and boldness of Dana. He took good care, on the one hand, not to make his charge until 1874, by which time all the alleged authorities were dead: Lincoln, Stanton and finally Chase. On the other hand he must have known perfectly well that sooner or later the War Department would print his dispatches from Chattanooga to Stanton and disclose the truth. But knowing, as any newspaper man does, the wonderfully lasting qualities of a statement boldly maintained and often repeated, he prob-

¹ Original at Mentor.

ably felt that his slander would become too well established to be dislodged even by contrary evidence.

As for Rosecrans, it is clear that his nature was morally too weak to endure the misfortunes of 1863-1864, and that it took refuge in imaginary reconstructions of the past. It was a regrettable termination to the intimate relationship which began in the long nocturnal debates on Catholicism at Murfreesboro and went through the nine months of waiting and campaigning, that Rosecrans should be found requiting his former chief of staff for his lifelong refusal to utter a word of criticism by unmanly quibbling in the campaign of 1880 and by recklessly twisting facts and inventing things to his discredit. For this Rosecrans had only his own weakness and vanity to blame, since Garfield went to his grave with the story of Rosecrans's real conduct and condition on that afternoon of despair and flight locked within him, except in so far as he may have spoken in strict confidence, and under injunctions against quotation that were never broken until after his death, to such intimate friends as Cox, Chase or Alden.

CHAPTER XXIV

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

FEW public men in the United States who have achieved a prominence at all comparable to that reached by Garfield attained to anything like his personal popularity during his lifetime, or were so generally beloved as he was at the time of his death. In fact, so conspicuous was this side of his nature, that it has proved an actual detriment to his reputation as a statesman. It was forced to the front by the circumstances of his last illness, called forth almost overwhelming demonstrations of devotion on the part of his friends, and was so extensively dwelt upon in all that was said or written of him after his death as to leave an impression that he was, after all, to be recorded in history chiefly as a kind-hearted, lovable man, whose "human" qualities constituted his principal claim to remembrance. Although the baselessness of this idea has been abundantly shown in the narrative chapters and will be still more emphatically demonstrated in those yet to follow, it remains true that among the public men of his time Garfield was conspicuous in this respect, and any biographical study would be gravely defective which did not devote adequate attention to a characteristic so marked and so honorable.

One of the most striking facts about Garfield's social personality is that it was to a great extent the product of his army experience. It will be recalled that up to 1861 he was heavily overdeveloped on the literary, religious and sentimental side. Neither the college life at Williams nor his early political experiences on the stump or in the legislature had sufficed to free him from an excessively emotional attitude toward himself and an undue dependence upon the satisfaction he derived from living in a small circle of mutually affectionate and admiring friends. Doubtless he would have broken away in time, but it might have been too late

for his own best interests, since he was slow to change. But the shock of the war wrenched him loose, and, casting him into the rough school of experience, brought about a rapid transformation which otherwise might have taken years to accomplish. Not only did he abandon, for all time, his intellectual censoriousness, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, but he learned, simultaneously, to respect and actually to like all manner of men. It is interesting to see, from his letters, how from the moment he assumed command of the Forty-second his whole attitude seemed to change and the friendliness and personal charm which he had heretofore kept only for his intimates, his Disciple associates or his pupils he now let appear to the world.

The result was that he suddenly acquired friends of a wholly new sort; his own Forty-second "boys," his fellow officers in the regiment, his staff officers in the brigade, his commanding generals, such as Wood, other officers such as Hazen and McDowell, above all Rosecrans, and such leading political figures as Governor Dennison and Secretary Chase. On numerous occasions, as his wife remarked, he "simply took people by storm," as illustrated in the cases of Chase and Rosecrans, much older men, who insisted, to his amazement, on keeping him as a companion. By the time he left the army he had a wide acquaintanceship among the foremost military and civilian figures of the United States and had made warm friendships with literally scores of men, ranging from privates to major generals and from government clerks to members of the cabinet.

The first marked result of this enormously widened social horizon was the fading of the ideal to which Garfield had clung so long, of keeping with him, as he went forward in life, the little circle of Hiram friends,—Rhodes, Hinsdale, Miss Booth,—as a sort of background and refuge. During the first years of the war his letters show that he was constantly looking backward to Hiram and dreaming of taking his place once more at the head of the Eclectic, there to resume the intellectual "growth" which he pictured as an ideal, in study and quiet companionship. Some of his war letters may serve to illustrate the depth of this feeling and

the difficulty with which he surrendered the hope. Writing to Rhodes in the autumn of 1861 (October 26) he said: "Your reference to the closing days of the fall term made my heart swell. . . . I have always hitherto in all my absences referred my life and its activities to our little circle of friends as the base of operations and estimated every event according as it was related to that basis. But now there is no basis. We can draw no diagrams on the sea. Much less can we centralize a life which is launched out on the uncertain currents of war."

But soon Garfield began to understand himself better and to recognize the fact that he had really outgrown the "enclosed life" of which he still dreamed. He wrote to his wife (May 12), "It would be just like my perverse nature if I ever should see quiet life again, to be restless and long for turbulence." By the autumn he saw it still more clearly. "I felt in some degree sad," he wrote to Hinsdale (September 12) after being nominated for Congress, "at the prospect of being for a series of years brought out into public life when I would perhaps get more growth in the quiet of private study. Still I don't know but I grow faster in storm than in calm. I suspect I do." Once again in the late autumn of 1862, when, in his despair over his failure to get a command he talked of resigning, he played with the idea of returning, but by the spring of 1863 this dream had faded and he wrote to Austin telling him that the trustees ought to elect a new principal. So the tie was severed.

After this it was not long before the "circle" itself dissolved, for, with Garfield gone, neither Rhodes nor Miss Booth was content to teach on at the Eclectic merely for the sake of affording a little companionship to their old-time leader in his brief Congressional vacations. Rhodes married in December, 1862, and not long afterwards drifted away wholly from the old life. The two rarely met thereafter. With all his mental suppleness and fineness of perception Rhodes was essentially a dilettante and he tried his luck successively in journalism, law and politics, without staying very long in any one field or trying very hard while in it. To Garfield his friend's lack of ambition was a disappointment. Yet not for a moment did this divergence weaken Gar-

field's regard. There was an intellectual keenness, a genuine culture in Rhodes which kept the friendship of the two men on a lasting basis. Their correspondence, maintained steadily throughout Garfield's life, continued to be intimate, confidential and affectionate and forms one of the best sources of information for Garfield's inmost thoughts on all subjects, political, literary or personal.

Miss Booth did not withdraw from the Eclectic until 1866, but before that time her old-time friendship with Garfield had been practically terminated on her side. She seems to have felt his liberalization, his gaining of a broad toleration, his acceptance of the usages of politics as signs of a decline in his standards, and even of personal weakness of character. He felt this keenly, for he constantly desired her judgment, her criticism and approval, valuing her as mentor and helper; but he could not keep her from dropping into reserve and indifference. But although the old-time intimacy was at an end, Garfield and his wife continued to hold her in the greatest respect, induced her to pay two brief visits to their Washington home and invariably spoke of her in the warmest terms. As an influence, however, which had once played so important a part, she ceased to figure in their lives.

There remained one Hiram friend, not exactly a member of his special "circle" although close to it, whose relationship to Garfield developed in these years into something deserving particular mention. This was B. A. Hinsdale, once a student, later a correspondent, whose solid intellectual qualities, downright honesty and directness of personality came to gain for him a unique place among Garfield's acquaintances. Hinsdale gave what Garfield came to value more and more, shrewd and frank criticisms, until at length Garfield acquired the habit of submitting every speech to him for judgment, laboring now and then to defend or explain points to which Hinsdale took exception, but quite frequently accepting the strictures of the younger man with complete humility.

An interesting feature of Garfield's friendship with Hins-

dale was the annual New Year's letter which the two men interchanged. Hinsdale began it, January 1, 1863, and Garfield on that occasion suggested making it a permanent custom. "It is a great pleasure," he wrote (January 6), "to me to receive epochal letters. They are milestones in the dusty highway of life, at which we stop for a moment and look back over the road we have travelled, and again inquire of ourselves what manner of men we are becoming and what changes the swift years are making with us. . . . I hope you will keep up the New Year's letter to me so long as I shall live and I here request you to write me any reflections, suggestions, criticisms or admonitions in regard to my course or life. . . . In answer I will do the same for you." In the long series of letters thus exchanged Garfield faithfully carried out his promise and gave serious and sympathetic thought to the problems of his friend, but he also fell into a habit of making comments upon his own experiences during the year just closed and upon his successes and failures. These self-judgments, made to an intimate and cool-headed friend, are among the most valuable sources for Garfield's opinions and inmost thoughts during his career.

As part of the inevitable process of maturing, Garfield gradually lost in these years that extreme emotionality which had led him during his youth to lavish an exaggerated affection upon various idealized acquaintances. Most of the childhood and juvenile "brothers" and "sisters" to whom he had vowed eternal friendship in every letter dropped out of sight except for occasional visits or rare, usually reminiscent, letters. This does not mean that Garfield failed to remember them and to retain a constantly kindly feeling, but simply that life had carried him on into broader fields and away from their respective circles. He wrote once in a while to Corydon Fuller, always heartily; he occasionally visited the former Poestenkill friends, Learneds and Coles, now in Michigan, and every now and then his letters to his wife reported that, when caught in New York over Sunday, he would call upon Miss Sellick in Lewisboro, reminiscent of senior year at Williams and the years immediately following.

Between these earlier friends and the later ones Garfield

himself at times drew a sharp line. He wrote to Rhodes (January 5, 1871): "I no longer look to the future for a life of love or of loving friendships. The conditions of my present life are so mingled with temporalities and matters of policy and prudence that I cannot put new acquaintances even in the old niches made vacant by the death of some friend of other days. For the highest and purest friendship I do not look nearer to this time than the 42d regiment. That file of soldiers stands guard on the frontier limits of my enchanted land. From their picket line the camp of my love extends back to Orange and my earliest childhood, and the Head Quarters of it all is the Hiram of the past. Within that camp no party rancor, no dangerous knowledge of the baseness of mankind, no commercial motives, not even the struggle for bread contend as a controlling motive or throw the shadow of doubt over the certainty of any friendship or the purity of any love. I tell you with all the emphasis I can use, that it is only within the above limits that I feel safe and perfectly happy in my friendships. I have never been deceived by one of the dwellers in that camp who had ever exchanged confidences with me. The rank you hold on the roster of that old army you know well."

It is touching to see, in the midst of his busy, overcrowded life, how steadily Garfield kept in touch with his own family connections. To his mother, who generally lived with him, he was the most affectionate and devoted of sons, and although the paths of life of his brother, his sisters and his cousins had diverged from his own, he never failed to call upon them once or twice a year, to send them money and give occasional practical assistance. An illustration of his filial sentiment appears in a letter he wrote to his wife (October 22, 1871) describing a journey he took with his mother and her sister, "Aunt Alpha," to their birthplace in Richmond, New Hampshire. He seized the occasion to push, concerning the Ballou family, the genealogical inquiries which always interested him, but he took his greatest delight in seeing the pleasure it gave his mother. "On this trip," he wrote, "I have learned many most interesting things about Mother's

family and history; and her character and life have gained new value and importance in my eyes. I cannot tell you how strange and touching it was to me to see her go back over the old ground which she left sixty years ago, and recognize instantly the place she knew then. . . . She hurried through the rooms of the old house where she was born with a strange mingling of the joyous romping child of eight and the sad gray-haired woman of seventy. I saw my little girl mother in her old house when she embraced her girl self in her woman's arms and sorrowed and rejoiced in the contrasts of the two characters. When with almost the timidity of a child she asked the strange mistress of the house for an apple from the orchard of her father, I choked clear down to the heart and felt how great a joy it was to be able to help her to see the old place and be a girl once more."

Every now and then an entry in the journal shows the strong sentiment he felt for his companions of childhood. "Nov. 1, 1872, at Bryan, Ohio, spent the day visiting with cousin William Letcher and his brother Amos Letcher who was captain of the canal boat 'Evening Star' while I was driver of the same." In the crisis of the campaign of 1874 he sought comfort in a return to the past. On September 8 he met his mother, sister Mary and Dr. Boynton at Solon. He wrote: "Drove to Orange over the old familiar ground, Found the friends and spent one of the pleasantest days of the year in rambling over the old fields and showing the children the spot where the old house stood in which I was born. In the evening sang some old favorite songs and hymns. The day has renewed my health and helped to restore my faith in life."

As he grew older, his sentiment regarding those places grew deeper. On September 29, 1875, Garfield spoke at "Burger's Grove." "Within ten rods of the grove was the site of Stephen Mapes' ashery where I worked thirty years ago. C. met me at the meeting and we crossed the fields together and walked to Henry's. The afternoon was as full of pleasure to me in the revival of old memories. I doubt if I can ever feel very old when I visit this spot, although the

contrast of now and long ago is very great." Similar notes mark the succeeding years. In 1879 Garfield summed it up after another visit to Henry Boynton at Orange: "I still feel, on revisiting the old home place, the thoughts of its early associations, and recall vividly the sensations and experiences connected with every hill and tree. The farther I grow away from those scenes the more I am attracted by their memories."

It remains to speak of one profound change brought about by these years in Garfield, namely, his development into a really domestic man, enjoying in natural fashion the life of a husband and father. It has been pointed out how, in marrying, he betrayed an almost morbid fear lest he should be separated from his "circle" and how he seemed to try to fuse his family with his friends. So long as he lived in Hiram—his wife's home and his own for many years—in the midst of familiar associates and continuing with the familiar work, marriage did not seem to make a great difference in life. Even the birth of his daughter was only an episode. But the war put an end to this state of mind, for in the midst of suffering and perils and sickness his heart turned back powerfully to the wife and the little girl at Hiram. His letters were filled with a deep realization of the meaning of the home he had left, and his reunion with his wife and child in the autumn of 1862 at Howland Springs marked the real beginning of what never afterwards waned, an intensely happy family life. The last traces of oversensitiveness and self-distrust, which up to 1861 had impaired his full acceptance of things domestic, had vanished in the school of war.

As if to symbolize this new and normal attitude on his part, in the autumn and winter of 1862-1863 he acquired, for the first time, a real home in Hiram. During the years 1858-1861 they had boarded; then, during the war, Mrs. Garfield and the child had lived with "Father Rudolph"; but now a house was bought and a series of enlargements and alterations carried through that made it practically their own construction. Garfield's letters from Murfreesboro

were filled with discussions of the plans and dreams of the coming home life. He paused in the midst of his overwhelming staff duties to discuss dimensions and alterations with the utmost zest. From his sick bed in August, just before the Chickamauga campaign, when he was barely able to hold a pen, he managed to send home advice about building an icehouse.

It was in this house, which sixty years later was still standing, that the war-time group gathered in 1863 to read the letters telling of hopes deferred, of camp tedium and finally of campaigns and battles; letters filled with longing for news of wife and child. It was to the Hiram house that Garfield returned in the autumn of 1863 with all his military honors upon him, to enjoy a brief respite with his family before plunging into the Congressional life, and it was there that in this same autumn his happiness was deepened by the birth October 11, of a son whom he named Harry—a favorite name already, as shown by its application to his war horse—and Augustus after Captain F. A. Williams, a Hiram boy, captain of Company A of the Forty-second, whom Garfield greatly loved. But almost immediately fate dealt him and his wife a stunning blow in the sudden and fatal illness of little "Trot," who died December 1, 1863. His lonely letters from Washington where, heartbroken, he was beginning his Congressional career, show how severe the stroke was. In January, 1864, the infant child fell ill and when his anxiety was relieved he wrote to his wife, "I had thought that his sister's blood upon our doorpost caused the angel in mercy to pass by and not slay our first-born son." "He was never quite the same after the death of Trot," said his wife in later years. In this time of grief, as so often happens, it was the wife who was the stronger and who by her faith and steadiness upheld the shaken soul of the man. "Your brave words have made me calmer and stronger," he wrote to her (December 13). "Do not fear that I will not love our home. It is more sacred to me than ever. I did for a little while think I could not live in it any more, but I think differently now." And from this bitter

disappointment the two emerged more closely united than ever before.

To fill the gap left by the death of "Trot," other children arrived in the years following. On October 17, 1865, came a second son, James Rudolph; on January 17, 1867, a daughter, Mary; and on August 3, 1870, a third son, whom Garfield named Irvin McDowell in honor of his friend, the General who commanded at Bull Run. Still later came Abram, born November 21, 1872, and named for Garfield's father; and Edward, born in 1874. Toward all these children Garfield was the most tender and devoted of fathers, although he had to snatch opportunities to see his babies during the few months when he was neither staggering under Congressional burdens nor away speaking in political campaigns. His letters are filled with loving messages—often with humorous ones—but frequently with concern for their health and welfare, since after the death of his firstborn the fear of renewed loss was never wholly absent from him.

But while the Hiram house was the real home during these years, there had to be a subsidiary one at Washington, for to Garfield it was unendurable that he should be deprived of all family life for months at a time. In the first session of Congress, 1863-1864, he found boarding in Washington utterly dismal, and the only alleviation was a short visit from his wife. "Sometimes I think," he groaned (February 3), "that my lot is peculiarly hard, that I get far less leisure than any other mortal and have far less of the enjoyments of life. It is a fearful price to pay for a little publicity—to be obliged to throw away all the dear pleasures of home and family just at a time when enjoyment has the keenest relish." After she had come and gone he wrote (May 23): "I have had a new sensation, new at least for many years. I have had symptoms of genuine homesickness during the last week. I shall hail with no common pleasure the day that releases me from my work here and lets me go home to you and the dear little Harry."

"When I got back from that session of Congress," said Garfield later, "and we sat in our little parlor there, she slipped into my hand a little memorandum which she had

made. This was the result of it. We had been married four years and three quarters and we had lived together just 20 weeks. . . . I said to myself, 'Now, if I am going to have any public life, I have got to determine right off whether I am going to live in a state of practical divorce from my family as most public men have done, leaving us to grow apart in experience, culture and knowledge of the world, or whether I shall make it a matter of yoke-fellows together. I then resolved that I would never again go to Washington to a session of Congress without taking her.'

For the ensuing winters Garfield insisted upon having his family accompany him. During the short session, December, 1864, to March, 1865, they rented rooms "on the second floor 452 13th st." The next year, during the long session, December, 1865, to July, 1866, he took "a house on F St. between 18th and 19th." This house he continued to occupy the next winter, but gave it up when he went to Europe. This necessitated house-hunting again in the late autumn of 1867, which was complicated by the fact that while the Garfields were in Europe a friend engaged for them one that was beyond their financial ability.

The upshot of his experiences was that Garfield decided in the winter of 1869 to build and own a house of his own at Washington. In notes made in 1880 Garfield told, in colloquial phrase, the story of the house as he recalled it. "In May 1869 when I made an estimate I found that I had paid out about \$6,000 for rent alone up to that time. Major Swaim, who had been my Chief of staff, was then on duty in Washington and he said to me, 'Now, see here, you go and build a house. I will take a mortgage on it and lend you enough money to pull you through.' He is a man of some means. The Campbell will case, that I had tried just about that time, brought me in a fee of \$3,500 and by borrowing about \$6,500 or \$7,000 from Swaim and giving him a mortgage on the house I built that house in Washington. The lot and house cost me about \$10,000."

The building took place in the summer of 1869, when Garfield was obliged to spend a long time in Washington preparing the census bill; and his letters show that the

daily watching of the construction was his chief consolation during the lonely hot season. "I go every day," he wrote (May 30), "to the little spot of earth where we are planting a home and think of what it will be to us if life and prosperity are spared to us. I have spent several hours half dreaming, as I watch the spadefuls of earth going out to make way for us and our little ones. . . . I watched the bricks as they were laid and felt how sweet it would be when all our little darlings should be happy and safe sheltered under its roof, to remember that I had thought of you and them, as each brick of its foundations were being laid, and that my love and prayers for their happiness were in the very mortar that held its walls." For over a month practically every bit of the construction took place under his eyes, and he frequently reported making suggestions for small improvements and alterations.

The new house did not, to Garfield's mind, diminish the importance of the Hiram home. "Tell darling Hal," he wrote to his wife, June 10, while the house was building, "that Papa will not abandon the old house at Hiram—that we will live here in the winter and roll on the grass there in the summer." This program was carried out, for after the family had lived in the new house for seven months, he moved them all back in June, 1870, to escape the summer heat and did not begin the autumn migration until the end of November, just before the session of Congress. This proved to be the rhythm of family life for many years thereafter. To Rhodes he wrote, on January 5, 1871, some sentences that suggest the happiness of the busy Congressman in his young family: "When the day (and a large part of the night) is done, it is every year more sweet to lose myself in the sweet circle which has gathered round my hearthstone. The triumph of love could not be more complete. There is not a day when I do not fear that such completeness will not be allowed to last long on earth. Of all this the world in which I live knows nothing."

With the passing of youthfulness Garfield came to lay aside all tendency to periods of depression or bitterness such as had marked him in 1853, 1856, again in 1861, and still more

in 1862. It would seem as though with his departure from Washington for Murfreesboro in 1863 he stepped out of one phase of his life into another; for never again did he descend into any such gloom as had enveloped him on those occasions. Of course he had his occasional dark moments, but they did not, as before 1863, fill him with despair over the world or over himself. They came, he met them firmly and they passed. The causes for this change were no doubt the arrival at inner and outer certainty; his adjustment to genuine domestic happiness, his establishment of a definite career in Congress. But whatever the reasons, there can be no doubt that Garfield, from 1863 onward, impressed all who met him as a cheerful, hopeful, genuinely optimistic man. His speeches, his letters, fell into the same vein and rarely drifted away. This mood became his fixed habit of living. People in general knew nothing else. The tendency was strong with such to think of him as living wholly on the surface of things. His intimate friends, of course, realized how fully he faced all facts whatever; he dodged nothing. He simply, by temperament and by will, kept always before him the hopeful aspect of all problems and all situations.

At the foundation of Garfield's widespread popularity lay his genuine responsiveness toward other people and his unfeigned interest in their affairs, problems and ideas. From harsh, bitter, pompous or socially affected persons he held aloof, and his journal contains evidence that he was perfectly capable of being both annoyed and bored by such, although his sense of humor frequently came to his relief. But to all others he turned an attentive gaze and a ready ear and offered a hearty hand-grasp, with a kindly charm of manner that stands out in everything written or said about him, as distinguishing him from all other men. Sometimes cynical observers suspected that this was a mannerism, or even a consciously assumed pose, adopted by a man ambitious of political advancement; but one has only to read the entries in Garfield's letters and journals to realize that this was his real self, that he was incapable of acting otherwise.

Toward his intimates he was warmly affectionate, with

some of the old demonstrativeness of the days of the Eclectic. He liked to apply humorous nicknames; he retained a half-boyish, half-paternal habit of placing his arm on a friend's shoulder; he made men feel that he liked them and enjoyed their companionship, thawing the reticent and inducing the conventional to relax. At the same time he retained, in all circumstances, a native dignity that was almost as marked as his friendliness. Part of this was due to his very erect bearing and a habit of carrying his head somewhat thrown back,—as shown in many photographs,—but most of it was the wholly unconscious result of his own self-respect and his fundamental courtesy toward others. One can trace this in the tone used about him by newspaper correspondents,—commonly supposed in the seventies to have respect for neither God nor man,—and even in the drawings of cartoonists. It was this innate dignity and not any military element in his nature which led to his being usually addressed as "General" even by his intimate friends. None of them called him "Jim"; the nickname would have seemed inappropriate. If used at all it was mainly by those who knew him slightly and affected an intimacy that they did not really possess. It was not that he concerned himself at all with what he was called; it was merely the effect that his personality produced. But while this trait or quality is plainly visible in his photographs, it is the testimony of those who knew him that in life it was subordinated to his vivacity of expression. "None of his pictures," said his wife (1915), "suggest at all the way his face lit up in conversation. His face was very responsive, not at all settled or fixed as the photographs invariably suggest."

One of the few direct comments made upon him by his wife in their correspondence may here be quoted as her judgment upon the relation between his social charm and his real nature. Writing May 5, 1875, while he was traveling in California she said: "You ought to be very proud and self-reliant with all your wonderful power to charm and captivate, and with your goodness and worth to hold the respect and esteem of everyone who comes to know you, and espe-

cially have you reason for self-respect in that your wife so thoroughly and entirely esteems you. Very many men may be *loved* devotedly by wives who know them to be worthless. But I think when a man has a wife who holds him in large esteem, who knows that in him there is no pretense, nothing but the *genuine*,—then he has reason to believe in his own worth.”

To attempt to give any account of the friendships of such a man would be impossible within any reasonable limits. All that can be done is to mention some of the categories within which they were found and to add a few illustrative words from his journals about sundry individuals. His political friends may be passed over rapidly, since they were the men with whom he was in constant contact for seventeen sessions of Congress and their names have already been repeatedly mentioned in the preceding chapters—Blaine, Hayes, Evarts, Dawes and scores of Republicans; Lamar, Tucker, Gibson, Knott, Potter and almost as many Democrats. The journal, after 1872, shows him constantly dining with his colleagues, sometimes at their houses, more frequently at hotels, either for political discussion or simply for diversion.

Apparently men were assembled for their conversational powers, regardless of their congeniality, for Garfield not infrequently met Butler at dinner, although he was of all men in Congress the most abhorred for his political principles—or lack of them—and his “unparalleled insolence” in debate. It made little difference what political issues might be raging. On January 28, 1877, in the crisis of the struggle in Congress over the electoral count, when passions were high, we find him dining comfortably with several Democrats. “Dined at Welcker’s with Neely Thompson who gave a dinner to Murat Halstead of Cincinnati. There were present besides these two gentlemen, Senators Thurman and Booth, ex-Senator Stewart, representatives Watterson Blackburn and Hooker and a Mr. Stillson of the press. The conversation took a very wide range and some interesting historical anecdotes were given. The character of Vallandigham was quite fully discussed and Thurman stated what I

had never heard before, that Vallandigham's arrest was procured in order to make him the candidate for Governor and that this was done by his Democratic friends."

One wishes that notes had been taken of conversations at the frequent dinners the Garfields had with the Blaine family, including always Gail Hamilton and Colonel Ingersoll. They evidently liked to meet frequently. Another person with whom Garfield was constantly dining was Secretary Evarts, who, like Fish, his predecessor, seemed particularly fond of having him at his table, sometimes as one of a party, now and then alone, for companionship. In short, Garfield's personal charm and his responsiveness and interest as a talker made him in demand at all times in the active and closely concentrated political society of the capital.

Garfield must have found such dinners relaxing, for no matter how hard he was working he seems never to have shirked them. In 1874, when he had his hardest time in driving a reluctant Congress to consider his appropriation bills and talked continually of the danger of breaking down, he recorded thirty-five dinners scattered along during the four winter months. The language of his diary frequently expressed satisfaction or interest in them, calling them often "brilliant" and never expressing any fatigue or distaste, except when he criticised the conversation at men's dinners, attended by B. F. Butler, as "too broad."

It is the universal testimony that Garfield, unlike some famous 'diners-out,' did not save his brilliancy for social occasions, but was at his best at his own table. "His home-life," said Smalley,¹ "was that of the plain New England farmer element from which he sprang, broadened and beautified by culture, but taking little note of the fancies of fashion. He liked substantial furniture, good engravings, a big cane-seated chair, an open fire, a simple meal, a wide brimmed felt hat and easy-fitting clothes. His table was bountifully supplied with plain well-cooked food, but he made his meals such feasts of reason that his guests scarcely noticed what they ate. . . . He enjoyed lingering at his

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 175.

own table with his wife, his children, his old mother and two or three friends and unbending his mind from the strain of the day's work with chat and anecdotes. His memory for anecdotes was almost as good as Lincoln's, but he remembered best such as he got in his reading of biography and history and were applicable to some intellectual theme he was discussing, rather than the merely quaint and humorous."

But dinners were not the only form of diversion which Garfield enjoyed with his colleagues. His diary shows that he played billiards with them, tried horseback riding for a while until he found it took too much time, and, when away from Washington, played croquet or occasionally indulged in shooting and fishing. In 1874 Garfield took up cards. "Nov. 13. I am forcing myself to some form of recreation," he wrote. "It would please me better to spend the evening in study." But he seems to have found it sufficiently entertaining to divert him now and then, and the journal shows him playing euchre with Congressmen and others, bezique with his wife, casino with the children. He even played whist at times, with venerable figures such as the justices of the Supreme Court or Alexander H. Stephens. On April 13, 1877, traveling westward with his family on the Baltimore and Ohio road, he found Senator Thurman in a director's car and presently, being invited to join him with Senator Sherman, the three "spent the day playing pedro." Oddly enough there is no sign that Garfield ever returned to his early love, chess. Apparently he was content to avoid the severe tests of the king of games.

Another group of friends whom he acquired through his residence in Washington were the men of science associated with him in the Smithsonian Institution, notably Professor Joseph Henry, Professor Spencer Baird and Louis Agassiz. Garfield was greatly drawn by the last-named. The journal said January 17, 1873): "Dined at Mr Hooper's with Professor Agassiz and wife and Professor Pierce. I know of few characters more simple and grand than Professor Agassiz. He carries all the sweetness of childhood in his

nature with the strength and massiveness and grandeur of a very great man. He has invited me to spend a part of the summer at Nantucket Island where he and other scientific men are to lecture to teachers. I should be glad to accept the invitation." Agassiz died that same year, and it fell to Garfield's lot to speak in his honor at the end of his term of service on the board of regents (December 19).

Friends of still another type were the economic thinkers who became interested in him after his speeches on the tariff and the currency, more especially the speech of May, 1868. The most distinguished of these, perhaps, was Dr. Francis Lieber, who began a correspondence after that speech and wrote to him frequently on public questions during the rest of his life. Other economists who wrote freely to him were Edward Atkinson of Boston, Amasa Walker, and later Francis A. Walker, Henry Villard and occasionally Henry C. Carey. The journal records "April 7. I dined with General Francis Walker, Professor Sumner of Yale College and Assistant Attorney General Hill. We discussed financial and political questions and had a very pleasant evening. Professor Sumner is writing a history of American currency and I ran over the proof sheets. The work has a good deal of value but I could see in it, as well as in the conversation of the Professor, a lack of that knowledge of the world which public life brings to a man, and yet that knowledge has some drawbacks. I studied Sumner from the stand-point I myself occupied twelve or fourteen years ago and wondered what the rough and tumble of a decade in Congress would do to him."

Two men of this type call for special notice, David A. Wells and Arthur Latham Perry. With the former, a Williams alumnus of an older generation, Garfield struck up a lively friendship, and while discussing earnestly all sorts of financial problems, he frequently adopted a tone of jocose banter unusual in his letters. On July 24, 1869, for instance, after having visited Wells at Norwich on Long Island Sound, he replied to a letter querying whether he had not left behind a night shirt. "If I left one at your house, I must

have stolen another. It appears that I must either lose a shirt or be accounted a thief! I wish I could go with you to the sea shore and once in the surf there would be no shirt between us." When Wells in 1876 opposed the Hawaiian reciprocity treaty Garfield took him to task for it in this indirect and humorous way (April 12): "Dear Wells, Old Pig-Iron [*i.e.*, Kelley] who has spent the last ten years of his life in making the people believe that you had sold yourself for British gold . . . is now trying a new device to ruin you. He is carrying a letter around in his pocket, showing it to your friends and pretending it is from you; a letter that extravagantly praises that precious old ass, for one of his speeches in opposition to the Hawaiian treaty. . . . I answer Old Pig's pretension by saying, I know that politics make strange bedfellows; that Pilate and Herod were made friends; that Titania hugged Nick Bottom with his ass's head . . . but that the scholar and economist of Norwich should hug to his bosom . . . the person of Old Pig is a slander that I, as your friend and defender am denying and denouncing as a very weak device of the enemy. Why don't you come on and see us, old boy, and we can put all these stories to rout?"

Another not dissimilar friendship was with Professor Perry of Williams College, a man who had taught Garfield in his junior year, but who did not apparently impress him with his pungent personality until the latter's interest in finance had become developed. Perry was slightly older than Garfield, but he seemed to retain in his eyes all of the dignity of a former teacher, for his letters to him were as deferential and respectful as those to Wells—a much older man—were familiar and intimate. Answering Perry's comments on his currency speech he wrote (June 3, 1868): "I assure you there are few men in the world whose approval of my financial speech could give me so much pleasure as your own. Your opportunities for calm, judicial consideration of the whole subject are much better than any man can have who is in the whirl and roar of political life and has an uneducated and clamorous party behind him, and you are doing and have long been doing a great national work in

the discussions you have given to the country from your quiet home in the hills. Even more than for your approval I thank you for your criticisms."

The note struck in this letter was constantly reiterated in Garfield's correspondence with Perry. The position of the independent professor, fearlessly testing the truth of all economic dogmas and all popular beliefs and announcing his findings with the authority of an expert, commanded his full respect and sympathy even if, as in this case, he did not by any means share his friend's crusading zeal for free trade.

It grieved Garfield, good Republican that he was, to discover a tendency on the part of both his tariff-reform friends to gravitate toward the Democratic party. "I feel some regret," he wrote to Perry (January 11, 1869), "that you have affiliated with the Democratic party for I know you cannot be in full sympathy with them. For the sake of science and the freedom from all party trammels which are necessary in writing a book on political economy, I am almost glad that you have placed yourself to some extent outside the pale of all parties." He tried to dissuade Wells, when the latter had been forced out of his position through protectionist pressure and was sore and angry. The journal records: "Called on David A. Wells. Had a long talk on politics and finance. He has made a serious mistake in connecting himself with the partisan politics of Connecticut. He ought to hold on to his career as a student and writer and not cripple his influence by partisanship. He assented to this and said he would withdraw from such strife hereafter. He was not well treated by Boutwell and the President and that fact has worked upon his mind and warped his judgment of men and parties until he is hardly fit to treat fairly any party question. Deliver me from 'a man with a grievance.'"

With such more recent friends as Perry and Wells might be grouped some of Garfield's older ones who served the same purpose of thoughtful correspondents and confidants upon all sorts of serious subjects. J. D. Cox gave him his cool and detached point of view, always disappointing him by his lack

of fervor, but stimulating him by his intellectual keenness. "Nov. 4 1876. Gov. Cox spoke an hour and a half clearly and ably but without enthusiasm. His mind is of the philosophical cast; he is full of good strong thoughts and I wish he had more enthusiasm." Garfield wrote home after a visit to Cox in 1875. "Oct. 15 He introduced me into a world of new and beautiful things brought out by his microscope, with which he is spending his leisure. I never visit him without feeling a new impulse in the way of culture and the pleasure is heightened by the fact that the impulse is not from one side alone. His nature and mine are in singular contrast, and yet with so many points in common as to make and keep us friends."

Perhaps the most peculiar friend of all was Jeremiah Black, the veteran lawyer and retired Democratic politician. Between him and Garfield yawned a wide gap in age—Black was twenty-one years older—and a still wider gap in politics. In fact, such was the bitterness, the ferocity, of Black's old line, states' rights Democracy that it seems a miracle that the friendship of these two men should have outlasted a single election. But Garfield had learned to look past this obstacle and see in Black a cultured and stimulating mind. His journal is dotted with admiring comments, not only on his legal ability but his extraordinary conversational powers. "Nov. 23 1873. I never meet Judge Black without feeling what power culture and genius of mind have to overcome all the roughness of partisan feeling and make a man a great and delightful friend."

In addition there should be mentioned sundry social organizations to which Garfield belonged. On several occasions he attended the Burns club and helped celebrate the anniversary of the poet's birth. "Jan 25, 1872. Responded, in place of Blaine to the toast, 'The day we celebrate.' Compared Burns with Horace. Horace softened the stately Latin into song. Burns lifted into immortal song the barbarous dialect of Scotland." There was also the somewhat celebrated "Literary Society of Washington," of which, after 1876, Garfield and his wife were active members. The journal

shows him attending, discussing various topics and commenting on the program. December 23, 1876, for instance, "a striking poem was read by Chief Justice Drake of the Court of Claims entitled 'the Paleocrystic Sea.' He did not avow the authorship, but I am satisfied that it was his own."

An interesting and important phase of Garfield's friendships is found in his relations with his war-time friends. Closest to Garfield, of course, were his old Forty-second "boys" of "his own" regiment. Probably no other group of men retained a stronger hold upon him than these, with whom he had remained only eight months in all. Whenever he could possibly arrange it he attended their reunions, *e.g.*, August 6, 1874, at Newburg. "The meeting was called to order in the Town Hall, where in the midst of a ball thirteen years ago, I made a speech and called for recruits and began the raising of Company G of the 42d regiment.

The Society greeted me as their President and former Colonel with all the enthusiasm I could have desired." "Aug. 28, 1878 At ten went to LaGrange where were about 150 members of the dear old Regiment assembled in reunion."

When F. H. Mason, one of his Eclectic boys who had enlisted at the very outset, started to write a history of the regiment, Garfield coöperated, helping Mason to get material at the War Department, and doubtless giving him information regarding himself. He first saw the completed volume in 1876, while he was on the stump. "At Akron," he wrote his wife (September 15), "Col. Pardee came on the cars and gave me a copy of the history of the 42nd Regiment. I read a hundred and fifty pages of it and cried more than a dozen times as I read the doings of those noble fellows. I want you to read it, for their sake and for mine. I think it is exceedingly well done."

When the Society of the Army of the Cumberland was organized in 1868, Garfield was unable to take part, owing to the fact that the date of its meetings conflicted with his Congressional duties, but after it had been moved from December to November he took great pleasure in attending. He was present in 1870, 1874, 1879 and 1880, taking an active part in the proceedings and making a number of

brief speeches. He indulged in some pretty broad horseplay in verbal exchanges with Sheridan in 1874, but the general tone of his utterances was, as usual, on a high plane.

With one manifestation of national forgetfulness or emotional slackness Garfield had small sympathy, namely, the sentimental outpourings over "the Blue and the Gray" which seemed to blur the whole meaning of the war. Garfield was the least vindictive of men, and cherished no hatred toward ex-Confederates, as such; but he was not ready to forget the justice of the cause for which he had fought. August 26, 1879, at Cambridge, Ohio, he writes: "I learned on arriving here that this reunion is a continuation of the 'Blue and Gray' reunions of recent years which have been attended by a great deal of meaningless gush. So while I respected the reasonable proprieties of the occasion I spoke plainly on the two issues on which the war was fought, slavery and state sovereignty." Two days later, at Steubenville, he encountered another gathering of the same kind and was moved to plain speech. After a review of union veterans, forming a column nearly a mile in length, "General Ewing," he writes, "read a long address devoted wholly to the technics of soldiering, but not a word in reference to the cause for which our soldiers fought. It was evidently so written as to be equally welcome to Blue and Gray and equally worthless to both. When I was called the old soldier spirit greeted me with the greatest enthusiasm. I took for the key of my speech the thought that wild beasts fight, but do not make war nor hold reunions in memory of their combats nor hold reunions in memory of the cause they defended etc. etc. I have never been received with more applause."

As might be expected, he kept up friendly relations with very many officers whom he had known, relations not confined to reunions. He corresponded frequently, for instance, with Sheldon, Pardee, Clapp, Plumb and others of the Forty-second; with General Wood, his division commander of the Corinth campaign; with General Hazen, particularly, who had been an Eclectic boy and had known Garfield at Hiram; with Colonel Opdyke; with General Rosecrans. He was a great friend of General Sherman, enjoying his pun-

gent speech and social activity. With General McDowell he continued on terms of especial intimacy. "I never arise from a visit with him," he wrote (May 11, 1873), "without increased feelings of veneration and respect for him. The tendencies toward idleness which show themselves in most army officers seem never to have afflicted him. His mind is clear, correct and full of resources."

A special group was formed by Garfield's Williams College friends, primarily his classmates, but also other alumni resident in Washington, who frequently dined together and held small reunions. It seems to have been the class meeting of 1871 at Williamstown that gave the impetus, to judge from the feeling displayed by Garfield in a letter to D. C. Farr of New Bedford, who had asked him for information. He wrote (July 24) a full description of the session in which "the class register was called in alphabetical order and if the person called was present he gave a brief history of his career since leaving college—if absent each member of the class contributed what information he possessed. . . . These histories filled the whole range, 'from grave to gay, from lively to serene' and I doubt if any member of the class ever passed an evening filled with more genuine, hearty, manly companionship. . . . All the little differences and irritations of college life had passed away and there remained a strong and united sentiment of personal regard for each other, of deep and earnest affection for the college and pride in its success."

The journal reports many little reunions at Washington, with Gilfillan of the Treasury Department, Colonel Rockwell and Garfield himself as the nucleus around which gathered visiting classmates or temporary residents. On December 17, 1874, for example, he records a Williams dinner. "Dined with Hill and three other class-mates at six. They were Captain Rockwell, Reverend G. B. Newcomb of New Haven and Gilfillan of the Treasury. We had a delightful reunion. Of forty-two graduates in our class in 1856 more than half were in the army and yet up to the present time only four are dead. Lamberton died of consumption only a few months after graduation, Robbins was drowned

two years after graduation and Baxter was killed in battle. Bronson died two years ago. On the whole the class have done remarkably well and are a noble set of fellows."

It is interesting to see how Garfield's Williams classmates turned up wherever he went on political speaking tours. In March, 1876, at Springfield he was called on by Dr. Bowles, a classmate. In October of the same year, at Hackensack, N. J., "I found my class-mate Lavalette Wilson in the audience and got him on the stand and had a pleasant visit while Mills was speaking. I followed for an hour and a half. Made an effective speech, probably better for Wilson's being near me." On October 26, 1878, at Rochester, New York, he was "taken in charge by Fitch and Pingree [Williams College friends] . . . spent the night at Fitch's. . . . We had a pleasant college reunion." At Chicago, January 3, 1879, in frightfully cold weather, "my old class-mate Wilber came a long distance to see me." Again at Madison, Wisconsin, July 22, he recorded, "Many citizens called on me, among them my classmate Dan. Campbell at Williams whom I have not seen since our graduation." So the old ties continued fresh amid all the great changes of his political career.

One of these classmates, Colonel A. F. Rockwell, assumed, after 1874, the function of an intimate friend of the kind that Rhodes had formerly been. Garfield undoubtedly felt the need of one or more "cronies," nonpolitical intimate friends, with whom he could unbend and feel comfortably at home. Such was Captain D. G. Swaim, who remained steadily, since the days of the Twentieth Brigade, an admiring and faithful satellite. These two men, apart from the general current of Washington politics, supplied the elements of neighborliness and intimacy which his nature craved. They "dropped in," they played billiards with him hours at a stretch, they went with him to the theater and to baseball games. They formed an indispensable element of his Washington life, a refuge from Senators, Congressmen and Judges, or even scientists and economists.

During all these years of development and growth Garfield changed not at all in one fundamental respect. He remained the son of the Western Reserve, the child of the

region where he had been born, and no matter whether he lived many months of each year in Washington or traveled in Europe, he came back to the nineteenth district as "home." His roots went down deeply. It is interesting to see how in his letters and in his personal relations he gained an acquaintance with all parts of his district, and how, in every county, every township where he went, as visitor, guest or stump speaker, he made devoted friends, who were prepared to fight for his political welfare to the very last.

Garfield's letter-book, which begins in May, 1868, shows very clearly who the men were upon whom he relied for support at that time, and some of them deserve particular notice because of their special intimacy with him. Foremost among them all was Harmon Austin, once Garfield's protector and friend on the Board of Trustees of the Eclectic, and after the summer of 1862 his infallible adviser on all things political in the nineteenth district. No biography of Garfield could be considered adequate which did not give full credit to the influence of this admirable and superlatively loyal friend. Austin was a born politician of the Yankee type, quiet, sagacious and unerring, and to his skill and wisdom Garfield bore ungrudging testimony.

Second only to Austin was W. C. Howells, editor of the Ashtabula *Sentinel*, upon whom a reflected illumination has been shed by the writings of his more famous son, William Dean Howells. To the picture of this single-minded but somewhat unworldly editor drawn in Howells's *Days of My Youth* Garfield's letters bear concurrent testimony, and there appears in everything that he wrote about the Howells family a strain of admiration and affection.

Much the same could be said of Garfield's relations with Lyman Hall and his son, Halsey R. W. Hall, of Ravenna, editors of the Ravenna *Democrat*, among the earliest of Garfield's newspaper supporters. Some of the very best letters he wrote were addressed to the younger Hall. Still another, one of the finest type of the country editor, was J. O. Converse of Chardon, whose editorial ability was as marked as his steady loyalty to Garfield.

As for the "leading citizens" with whom he corresponded

from time to time, and to whom he turned for support in political contests, their names were legion. Among those which appeared most frequently in his letter-books were E. H. Fitch and Henry Fassett of Ashtabula, Captain A. W. Stiles of Jefferson, G. W. Steele and Horace Steele of Painesville, Peter Hitchcock and D. W. Canfield of Geauga County, F. E. Hutchins, T. J. McLain and Judge Kinsman from Warren—the center of his enemies; Colonel Joseph Bruff of Damascoville, J. R. Conrad of Atwater, and notably F. G. Servis of Canfield in Mahoning County.

In addition to these political associates, Garfield's general acquaintance in the district steadily broadened. Each shift in residence meant a new set of neighbors and a new crop of friends. Especially was this true after he had settled himself upon the Mentor farm. People swarmed down upon him, just as soon as he was half-way established,—political friends, family connections, old-time pupils, old neighbors, new acquaintances. Nothing but an actual reading of his journal or inspection of his letter-books can give any adequate idea of the extent to which his time, his interest and his strength were levied upon by his innumerable friends, old and new.

These friends, be it noted, were of all sorts. In spite of his own bookishness and intellectual preoccupations, Garfield was perfectly capable of strong affection for plain people, even illiterate ones, so long as they had the flavor of human kindness and shrewdness. Sheer companionability attracted him, and he took pleasure in the society of rough old soldiers and wholly commonplace individuals, as well as in that of public men, generals, college professors or clergymen. Garfield's social democracy was just as inherent as was his intellectual activity, and though it surprised and displeased some of his fastidious friends to find him hobnobbing with, and genuinely liking, sundry extremely rough diamonds, there is no sign that his capacity for enjoying the best was in the slightest degree impaired by his kindly breadth and tolerance.

Garfield took especial pleasure in seeing old-time Hiram associates or pupils. In August, 1874, he was visited at

Little Mountain by an old colleague. "Prof. H. W. Everest visited us today with his wife and children. He and I were students at Chester twenty-five years ago. He was afterwards my associate in the school at Hiram. . . . How curiously Everest's life and mine have drifted on in different channels." One Sunday, September 29, 1878, at Mentor, he noted: "In the evening we drove to church and heard a good sermon by John Encell who was my school mate at Hiram twenty-seven years ago. His wife (Jennie Gardiner) was a member of the Greek class which recited to me nearly two years."

There was a club called the "Quintinkle" to which references appeared in the journal nearly every summer. This had for members certain of Garfield's old Disciple associates dating from his early youth—Isaac Erret, Harrison Jones, the Forty-second chaplain, Dr. Streator, Dr. Robison and their wives. The spirit in which he enjoyed meeting with these ancient acquaintances appears, for instance, August 7, 1875: "We had a long session of the 'Quintinkle' in the evening and reviewed many of the events of our early friendship. It is nearly impossible for any of us ever to have another set of friends who shall know so much of each other and shall reach back in their friendship to the early days of youth and obscurity. We sat up till two hours after midnight and parted for the night with renewals of old bonds."

This zest for friendship imposed on Garfield burdens that would almost have crushed a less robust person. All his war-time friends, all his Hiram and district associates, felt that they had a claim on his interest and a right to part of his time. Those who came to Washington called upon him and often wished to be "shown around"; those who did not come wrote voluminous letters, sending approval or criticism, making requests or proffering suggestions. His correspondence swelled to tremendous proportions, until his struggle to answer merely the necessary letters became a severe burden. For many years, accordingly, G. U. Rose acted as his stenographer, calling several times a week and "clearing the desk" on such occasions. At Mentor he was compelled to summon stenographers from Cleveland to come to his aid.

Finally, in the autumn of 1878, he secured Joseph Stanley-Brown, a young man barely of age, to act as his regular secretary during the Congressional sessions that followed, soon discovering that in him he had found someone capable of furnishing actual assistance in the handling of his routine correspondence.

For the decade following the war, the real beginning of family life, Garfield and his wife regarded the little Hiram house as their real home. It was practically impossible for a Congressman boarding, or living in a few rooms, or even in his own house, to play the social game when babies were small and domestic cares many. He wrote in 1869 to a friend (Rev. S. P. Hildreth, January 16): "Receptions and ceremonial generally have no charms for me. To my taste a quiet corner, a few friends and plenty of books are far more desirable." His letters show that it was at Hiram that he took solid comfort. He wrote to Hinsdale, for instance, after Congress had adjourned in 1868 (July 31): "The long strain of the session has left me so nearly powerless that I feel like lying still indefinitely. The delightful coolness of our place compared with the terrible heat we have just left makes me wish to sit still and gossip and dream." Later in the same summer he wrote to another correspondent (L. L. Pinkerton, August 10): "It has been balm to the sick soul to rest here among the trees and the green grass and the quiet. I have almost never been so tired and worn out. . . . The hot weather has made the whole family half sick, and it was health and happiness to see the little boys rollick and rejoice in the wide spaces of grass and trees."

The next year he wrote to Fuller (May 10, 1869): "I am here at the old place, so full of dear old memories. C—— sits near me and our three little ones are playing about us. The delicious spring weather of Hiram gives fragrance and balm to the air and I believe if you were here we could stroll out into the old familiar woods and feel as we did seventeen years ago. How delightful such a visit would be to my heart!" "I am delighting myself," he wrote to Cox (July 31, 1870), "with the freedom and quiet of the country. I

wish you were here to read Mommsen with me and roll on the grass."

Hinsdale, their intimate friend and neighbor, wrote: "Their Hiram life was perfectly simple and natural, as became their estate, their nature and their surroundings. Save the constantly-used and ever-growing library, nothing in or about General Garfield's home stood in contrast to the homes of his neighbors. His house was a place for 'plain living and high thinking.' If the old walls could speak, what thoughts would they not voice, what emotions utter, what joyousness describe! . . . In Hiram he was full of 'jests and youthful jollity' or 'quips and cranks.' At the same time he never lost his propriety or surrendered the dignity of his carriage. The over grave might indeed have taken offense at his mirth and flow of spirits; but he who could 'unbend' with a boy could instantly rise to the level of the grave and the serious.

"His delight in conversation was equalled only by his excellence as a converser. He was at home to all men and at home with them. He would leave on the mind of the Montana stage-driver on whose box he sat, the impression that he was an extraordinary man; and he met the courtly Sir Edward Thornton, on the latter's departure for England, with an equal dignity and grace. These were the grand years in Garfield's life when he had not become so absorbed in public affairs as he afterwards became. . . . They were years of reading, study, thinking, and communion with friends and family. He was happy in his family, his friends and in his work. To live by his side those years, to be welcome to his house, to walk with him through field and wood, to hear him discuss books, men and questions, with him to 'outwatch the Bear' was a privilege such as the gods of high Olympus never granted to their favorites."¹

William Dean Howells, son of Garfield's sturdy political friend, the editor of the Ashtabula *Sentinel*, has left a single vivid picture of an evening at Hiram in his last book, *Years of My Youth* (p. 205). It was in June, 1870, that the two

¹ *President Garfield and Education*, p. 92.

Howellses, father and son, visited Garfield, and the young author, fresh from his new literary life in Boston, was at once drawn out to speak of his associates. "As we were sitting with the Garfield family on the veranda that overlooked their lawn," he wrote, "I was beginning to speak of the famous poets I knew when Garfield stopped me with 'Just a minute.' He ran down into the grassy space first to one fence and then to the other at the sides, and waved a wild arm of invitation to the neighbors who were also sitting on their back porches. 'Come over here!' he shouted. 'He's telling about Holmes, and Longfellow, and Lowell, and Whittier.' And at his bidding dim forms began to mount the fences and follow him up to his veranda, 'Now go on,' he called to me, when we were all seated, and I went on, while the whippoorwills whirred and whistled round and the hours drew towards midnight. The neighbors must have been professors in the Eclectic Institute of Hiram where Garfield himself had once taught the ancient languages and literature; and I do not see how a sweeter homage could have been paid to the great renowns I was chanting so eagerly."

As time went on, however, the Garfield family gradually came to consider Washington, where they lived the major part of the year, as their real residence. While this was partly due to the increasing burden of Garfield's Congressional duties, it was doubtless a consequence of the active social life which the family came to enjoy after the building of the Washington house made them genuine residents. The first steps toward a separation from Hiram were taken in 1872, when Garfield decided to sell his house to Hinsdale rather than pay the expenses of further repairs or of enlargements to accommodate the increased size of his family. When the transaction was completed Garfield wrote to his mother (July 11, 1872), "It cost me a struggle to part with the old house, which C. built so much of and where our boys were all born; but after all I feel relieved." For two summers the family spent part of the time at "Father Rudolph's," but this threw too great burdens of housekeeping both on Mrs. Garfield and on her parents, so in 1873 a radical departure was made by first renting and then building a cot-

tage at Little Mountain, near Painesville, where a club of Cleveland people had established a summer colony. "If I stay in Congress," wrote Garfield (August 30, 1873), "this arrangement will be convenient. If I do not, I hope to settle in Cleveland at the law and still the Club will be of use in hot weather. It is a very good place for the children, and much of our immediate future must be devoted to them." This place served the family in 1874, but the next two years they were detained so long in Washington, by Garfield's illness or by the session of Congress, as to make the Little Mountain cottage unavailable and the family took refuge at the seashore. To Hiram they returned only for brief visits.

For Garfield thus to uproot himself from the spot which had been the scene of his deepest and holiest experiences was not easy, even when he felt it to be necessary. He wrote in his journal (September 26, 1875): "In the afternoon C and I took our annual walk into Father Rudolph's east woods, where we went seventeen years ago to determine the question of our marriage. From the present outlook it is not improbable that this is the last of our walks, certainly as residents of Hiram. I shall hope however that we may often return to visit the spot and renew its associations. I want my children to know it and love it for what it has been to us." But in 1876, when he went there on business, he wrote: "The house and the town are very lonesome and it does not seem as though I could ever feel at home here again. How strangely our lives change in the lapse of years." Finally (March 16, 1877) he recorded: "I have become gradually weaned from Hiram and can leave it with but few regrets. Fifteen years ago it would have seemed sacrilege to quit that place."

In the autumn of 1876, after Garfield had virtually abandoned the idea of leaving public life and practicing law in Cleveland, he rather suddenly bought a farm at Mentor, in Lake County, near Painesville. In 1880 he gave this account of his decision. "While on Little Mountain, looking over and riding about this country, I said, 'Here is my love of a farm revived in me. Now I must go tossing about at watering places in summer at heavy expense, or I must get a place

where my boys can learn to work, and where I can myself have some exercise, where I can touch the earth and get some strength from it,' I saw this farm down here for sale and late in the fall of 1876, just as I was starting for Washington I bought it on five or six years time," for \$115 an acre. In reporting the purchase to his wife he concluded his letter (October 5), "So my darling, you shall have a home and a cow."

With this venture began a wholly new phase of Garfield's life, for into it he and his wife plunged with a zest that knew no flagging. Nothing but a day by day following of the journal for 1877 to 1880 can give the faintest idea of the extent to which these people immersed themselves in the experiment. Perhaps a summary of their beginnings may serve imperfectly to suggest their energy. In March, 1877, they made their first descent on the farm for a few days, planned rebuilding, draining a swamp and moving the barns, bought crockery, furniture and supplies and dashed back to Washington. By April 14 they were there again and found carpenters and painters at work, but "the general state of chaos opens before us a fine field for work and contrivance," was Garfield's courageous observation. They attacked everything at once, fitting up the house while it was being enlarged, buying horses and setting them at work ploughing, getting farm tools, laying flooring, planting barley, hunting up a cow, selecting fruit trees and so forth. On April 22 the diary reports, "I close the week quite sore from lifting and [with] a good old-fashioned feeling of physical weariness." So the experiment was fairly begun.

"You can hardly imagine," he wrote to Hinsdale (May 13), "how completely I have turned my mind out of its usual channels during the last four weeks. You know I have never been able to do anything moderately; and today I find myself lame in every muscle with too much lifting and digging." When Garfield was forced to go to Mobile on the railroad lawsuit, he wrote (June 2): "Every day I try to imagine what is going on at the farm; how high the corn is, what the men are doing, whether the library is done and grained, what progress is being made with the horse barn, whether

the pit for the barnyard water was a success, whether the brush are taken out of the orchard, the stumps hauled away from the meadows, the plaster sowed, the south field plowed, Kit's harness oiled and her hind shoes set." The moment he was back at the farm he plunged in with the same immoderate energy, until he had to admit to the journal, "I have overworked myself and am lame and tired." But none the less he reported (June 30): "Getting in hay. Pitched on two loads and found myself drenched with perspiration." But as the summer went on the complaints of fatigue disappeared, while the same intense interest continued in the crops and the farm animals. Forced to return to Washington in October for a special session of Congress, he took a few days off in November to rush back. "Nov. 5 Spent the day in pushing forward farm affairs, hurrying up the husking and getting the fall work forward." Again, the holiday recess in December found him back inspecting things, arranging for mending fences and for chopping wood from the wood lot.

The next summer, in reviewing this era of hard work, he pronounced this judgment (June 23): "As I look over the work of the late session . . . I incline to think I have done more effective service than in any other. . . . I attribute some of the effectiveness to the five months I spent on the farm last season. It gave me robust health and let my mind lie fallow for a while. From the first day of the October session I felt my intellectual atmosphere to be clearer and vigorous thinking was easier for me than usual."

It is not too much to say that from 1877 to 1880 the farm at Mentor overshadowed most of the other interests which had made their appearance in previous summers. He wanted nothing more than to get back to the problem of raising grain and developing his land and stock. The journal records every step in the year's cycle of farm work, from the first ploughing and planting to the last clearing up in the autumn, with the precise result of every crop and every purchase of a farm animal.

The fact that Congressional duties interfered seriously with his stay at Mentor in both 1878 and 1879 did not in

the slightest serve to check his enthusiasm. He would dash off now and then during the session to inspect the crops and even in the midst of campaigns he found time to supervise farm work. His zest was insatiable. On June 23 he wrote, "I come home now a good deal jaded, but I hope the touch of the earth will give me renewed strength as is related in the Greek fable." So he plunged in. On July 2 he reported, for instance: "Got hay in cock before heavy rain which came at half past four. I raked three hours." "July 11 sowed corn in the young orchard. Finding that the man at hand did not know how to drive oxen, I drove them three hours and came in much heated. Overdid the work a little for my soft muscle."

But nothing could stop the enthusiast. "Sat. 13 At three I went to the meadow north of the barn lot and helped with the hay until seven p.m. Got it all in. . . . Lamed myself pitching and loading, which last was not well done. I have not loaded before for at least twenty-five years." "July 16. Spent the whole forenoon in fussing about the farm; neglected my growing pile of unanswered letters." "July 18 Went with Wallace Hammond and the oxen to Doctor Robinson's South woods for forty foot poles for straw stack. Lifted too hard in loading them and came home very weary." After several days of such furious exertion he noted a respite. "Sat. July 20. Washed and dressed like a gentleman and spent the day mainly visiting with friends."

After this the journal indicates that Garfield gradually left the work to the farm hands and devoted himself more to inspection and supervision than to heavy lifting and driving oxen. The time had also arrived to consider ways and means. On October 25, after a day of inspection and planning for the winter, he wrote: "I am brought near to the verge of my financial ability to meet expenditures, but I think it better to use rather than accumulate until the day for enjoyment is past. . . . I wonder," he added, "how long this power to do muscular work . . . will remain to me. I have frequently a rheumatic reminder that I am not a very young man any longer."

Garfield's feeling about the farm was on an entirely dif-

ferent basis from his enjoyment of Hiram in earlier years. It was not a matter of association, of pleasant resting, of green fields and trees, but of an absorbing interest, a challenging contest and healthful work. Coupled with this was, of course, the sense of ownership, of family property. There was little sentiment recorded in the journal about the Mentor place, beyond that of making a suitable summer home for wife and children, but there was intense absorption.

"He was a countryman through and through," said Smalley,¹ "a lover of orchards, forests, growing crops, cattle, meadows and wild flowers. I remember the pleasure he took, after he went to live upon the Mentor farm, in driving a yoke of cattle and in helping his farm-hands in the hay-field. He found that he could still swing a scythe with the best of them, and that his old knowledge of soils and seasons, of planting, harvesting and hoeing crops, gained when a boy, all came back to him. His farm was the first home he had that satisfied his tastes. His house in Hiram was only a little cottage with a contracted village-lot; his Washington house was a winter dwelling to be retained while he stayed in public life, but the Mentor farm gave him the conditions of a broad, free, natural home-life which, to his thinking, was possible only in the country. It was in the spring of 1880 that his means enabled him to expand the little story-and-a-half farmhouse with its small rooms and low ceilings, into a spacious, comfortable dwelling. After thirty years of hard work, he found himself, at forty-eight, in the possession, at last, of a home that was the expression of his tastes and desires."

By the summer of 1879 the farm began to assume the aspect of a scientific problem. On July 31 he wrote: "Made a study of what I would do with the fields for the coming season and reached several conclusions satisfactory to myself but have left some portions yet in abeyance. The dry weather has made the farm look badly and I feel uncertain what its real value is as an enduring farm until I have tried it in a rainy season." Next we find him building a dam and backing up the water in a ditch so that it irrigated the lower

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 176.

fields. The experiment succeeded and Garfield felt encouraged. Here we see him turning the same careful, patient and practical attention to the farm problems that he had given to innumerable bills in Congress, items in appropriations and points in lawsuits. Next he tried an experiment in the comparative fertilizing effect of ground bone and pulverized limestone. "I long for time," he wrote (September 24), "to study agricultural chemistry and make experiments with soils and forces." When too tired for work, after the campaign of that year, he watched with interest the digging of potatoes, "which," he said, "is something akin to mining for the precious metals. Each hill has a possible surprise and you are curious to know what the soil and seed have produced." By October 24 he reported, "The potatoes which had such a charm for me are all in the cellar at last and I am losing my interest in them now that no mystery remains."

In the winter of 1879-1880 the enlargement of the farmhouse was completed, and in April the building was given additional furniture. In that same winter we find Garfield in correspondence with Austin on the subject of farm fertilizers, covering pages with discussion of the various sorts and their respective performances under scientific tests. If fate had allowed him to continue as he had planned his life, without doubt he would have made himself not merely a practical farmer but a highly experimental and scientific one; and that he would have succeeded in this field as in the law, by the exhibition of the same mental qualities, who can doubt?

Back of everything and above everything lay the steady shelter, refuge and support of a thoroughly happy domestic life. In spite of Garfield's restlessness and his long absences on stumping tours, his real anchorage was the family in the Washington house, at "Father Rudolph's," by the seaside or on the Mentor farm. Although death once more visited the household when, in 1876, Edward, the youngest child, died after an attack of whooping-cough, the letters of husband and wife and of the older children breathe contentment, courage and a brave meeting of the world's difficulties. Into the life of this household it is not necessary to go, further than to say that the journal gives a heart-warming

picture, with the usual problems of early education, sickness and worry, puzzles of temperament unaccountably developing, but above all interesting times together on the part of Garfield with his sons and daughter, and the noblest form of true companionship between husband and wife.

A very few quotations may serve to illustrate. Once when disciplinary difficulties presented themselves, Garfield reported trying, with reluctance, but firmly, as in the days of the school at Blue Rock, the effect of corporal punishment on the most unruly of the boys. With his usual caution he wrote (August 24, 1875): "In spite of Solomon and my own opinion, I have some doubt about this business of pounding goodness into a child. But it seems to work well . . . at least for the subsequent day. I wish I really knew how he really feels about it. Perhaps he will tell me years hence when I don't need to know. We ought to live one preliminary life in order to know how to live the real one."

In the vacations the journal shows him playing croquet with the children, going in swimming with the boys, taking one of them with him occasionally on a journey and trying to "get acquainted with them" after the enforced neglect of the Congressional sessions. Frequently during the winter months he lamented, "It is a pity I have so little time to devote to my children." The time came, however, when for a while he was brought into constant relations with them through an experiment in connection with their education. The one thing Garfield could not understand in his boys was the fact that they did not reproduce his own early zest for study. In November, 1873, he pondered over "the most difficult question I have ever confronted, namely what shall I do with my children in the matter of education. I believe that the mind naturally hungers and thirsts for knowledge. I cannot doubt that something is wrong with our system of education which has made both my boys hate the sight of a school book."

Like most parents he laid the blame on the schools. "My faith in our public schools is steadily diminishing," he wrote (November 13). "The course of study is unnatural and the children are too over crowded for solid healthy growth." So he put them in a kindergarten although with misgivings

over the failure of the three little pupils to respond with vigor. "I am troubled," he wrote (May 15, 1874), "to know what to do with the children next in regard to their education. They do not seem to have that hunger and thirst after knowledge that I always felt when I was a child." What Garfield forgot, as so many parents do, was that for him school was the only alternative to hard work, the only opening for a more attractive future, whereas for his children it was the alternative to play. They were as normal as he, as their later lives were abundantly to prove.

The next season, that of 1874-1875, they were sent to a private school where they could "have the hand of a master," but the chief innovation was that Garfield began the custom of helping the boys with their lessons, and presently, bit by bit, was drawn into a scheme of parental education that was to be of great value to them and of the utmost delight to him. What started it was an experiment in telling the children the story of the tragedy of "Iphigenia in Tauris," which he had just read in translation. "Nov. 29, 1874, I was pleased to see how strongly the story touched the hearts of the little ones. J. left the room crying when he thought Iphigenia would be sacrificed. Several other members of the family were shedding tears before the story was completed. This suggests to me that it might be possible to work a large share of ancient and modern literature and history in the minds of these little people." Following up this idea he began to read aloud to them Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, continuing this for a long time with profit. Later he took up Audubon, read the descriptions of birds and animals and followed this up by taking them to see the specimens in the Smithsonian Museum.

In the autumn of 1877 the Garfields became once more dissatisfied with the boys' progress. One day, resting on the sofa, he called on one of the boys to read aloud to him, and was appalled at the result. The lad seemed to have no power of framing sentences or pronouncing words, to say nothing of reading with expression. Such a condition of things in the son of a man trained from childhood in public speaking demanded immediate reform. So the boys were taken out of

school, taught at home by a governess and to some extent by their parents and drilled in elocution.¹ By February of 1878 Garfield was recording "literary exercises" in public by the children, before "a dozen friends," and April 26 he was able to say, "These exercises have increased in interest week by week and the little fellows are storing up a good many gems of literature." By May he felt that the experiment of home teaching had been a success. The boys were so pleased with their new accomplishment that they organized a debating club of their own, "The United States Debating Club," the last meeting of which, the next autumn, Garfield called "quite a spirited affair." In this way he was evidently trying to give them something of what he had himself enjoyed so thoroughly at the Eclectic.

Finally in the autumn of 1879 the two boys were sent to St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, and Garfield realized that for him one phase of life was ended. "It is the dawn of independent life for them. I hail it for their sake. But the greater their joy and success, the more certain their separation from home. . . . It will require no little self-sacrifice on my part to see and aid them in the work of separating these precious home ties. I begin to see how it is that parents come to regard children as their own decorations, given for their own selfish comfort. The severe lesson must be learned that they are given to go alone."

As they went along in the new school he followed with anxiety and pride their academic progress, feeling always the sense of their great good fortune as compared with his own. "May 4, 1880, Letter from the boys with very charming news of their progress. . . . They have begun Sallust and Homer. I had not advanced as far as these two boys, one sixteen and the other fourteen, until I was twenty-one." It should be added that all through these years he was planning to have the two older boys enter Williams College, and he looked forward to living over again in their college careers his own days of youthful aspiration and struggle, with the added delight of knowing that Mark Hopkins, the teacher he so venerated, was still there, teaching in his old

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, 1913.

age the same course he himself had studied under his inspiring guidance thirty-five years before.

At the center of this family stood the mother, about whom revolved the active children and the incessantly traveling and laboring husband. Once when Garfield knew that she was not well he wrote to her, in anxiety (May 29, 1874): "Your health is the continent, the solid land on which I build all my happiness and hope. When you are sick, I am like the inhabitants of countries visited by earthquakes." At the end of a letter to her (May 20, 1880) he said: "I am sure you have never yet realized how entirely this family are centered in you and how every motion of your life is felt in the smallest fibre of every one of us. If I were to try I am sure I could not analyze the processes by which you have gained such an ascendancy over us all, but the power is none the less real."

No such analysis need be attempted. The letters and journal show the growth of a closely knit companionship, as the cares of the nursery diminished and as Garfield's committee business was practically terminated after 1875. The two had more and more time to read together, to join in making social calls, to dine out together, to travel in company and, in short, to enter that last and most enduring phase of married happiness and contentment. The journal of the years 1879-1880 shows them growing more and more nearly inseparable in the hours of the day after the House had adjourned. The morning after the joyful return of the two older boys from their first term at St. Paul's he wrote in his diary, "Dec. 21, A quiet and delightful breakfast with our whole family and only them, the double pleasure of completeness and exclusiveness."

Garfield paid the penalty for his widespread friendliness and his great desire to please his friends, by being misjudged during his lifetime and after his death. Many people who did not know him intimately, including those on the outer circles of his acquaintance as well as those who disliked him, credited him with excessive softness of fiber. Others, noting his apparently equal friendliness with men of an austere independence like J. D. Cox and morally obtuse men

like Oakes Ames; with men of culture and keenness like Whitelaw Reid and utterly commonplace neighbors in Washington or in the nineteenth district, came to the conclusion that he was fundamentally incapable of estimating the worth or ability of any man. "Garfield is a child," wrote a not unfriendly critic (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 9, 1881), "in his ignorance of men. While he is great among his books, he sees only one side of men. He can't fathom their motives." Butterworth, speaking of him in the House, said,¹ "He was credulous and confiding as a child and gave his confidence without reserve and seemed to deem a betrayal of that confidence impossible." Donn Piatt, a journalistic free-lance and an old acquaintance of Garfield, wrote of him in 1880: "His knowledge of human nature is woefully deficient. He does not know one man from another, so far as the inner workings of that mysterious machine called man, is concerned. . . . The sweetness of his nature is something amazing. He cannot be made to think any one means him ill."

A similar view was expressed by J. S. Wise of Virginia, who belonged to the "Readjuster" or debt-scaling faction in his state and bitterly resented Garfield's personal good-fellowship with sundry Virginians of the regular Democratic party, his own enemies. "The same men," said Wise,² "who would fawn upon Garfield and call him 'Jim' when they wanted his help . . . returned to their Southern districts in instances within my knowledge and would accuse him of corruption in the De Golyer contract, utterly regardless of any obligation of friendship. And when it was all over, back they would go to Washington and appear in the lobbies with their arms about Garfield's neck, joking and making merry with him as if they were his real friends, and he seemed to be flattered by it and not to have sense enough to see through it, or self-respect enough to resent such an insult."

Here again one who commented from the outside was unable to penetrate Garfield's real nature. It may be taken for certain that he knew nothing of any such duplicity as Wise

¹ Sen. Mis. Doc. 6, 49 Cong., 1 sess., p. 58.

² *Recollections of Thirteen Presidents*, p. 146.

describes on the part of the Southern Democrats, for great as was Garfield's power of forgiving or overlooking causes for offense, he had far too much self-respect to remain in good-fellowship with any person whom he knew to have assailed his honesty. On that point he was as sensitive as Wise himself or any other hot-blooded Virginian. His rupture with Rosecrans, described in the preceding chapter, is an example.

The comment of his wife on this aspect of his nature is interesting, inasmuch as she by no means shared his capacity for a wide range of friendships. "General Garfield," she remarked,¹ "brought out the best side of men, and that was the side he saw. He was not often mistaken as to their real abilities; he often was deceived as to their real characters." The evidence of his letter-books and journals abundantly confirms his wife's judgment. While the "slush and gush" of the boyhood days, avowing affection in every letter, were gone forever, a genuine kindliness permeates the whole mass. Harsh judgments on character are rare, men are taken for what they seem to be; there is almost never any exhibition of suspiciousness unless Garfield had been warned or unless the other man exhibited that trait. Then Garfield was on his guard. On the other hand, there is little or no extravagant valuation of men's abilities. This habit of judgment has been abundantly illustrated in the quotations from letters and journals and need not again be illustrated. As for the excessive credulity described by Butterworth, if one may judge from Garfield's letters, this is an extravagant statement. To certain men in whom he had confidence—and the number was not very small—he did write with freedom, but to most of his correspondents he revealed only so much as was necessary to the handling of matters in consideration. He was capable of profound silence and caution, and he rarely quoted one man to another unless the two were themselves in active coöperation. Nor did he swallow whole everything that he was told, as Butterworth supposed. While he was not given to suspicion, he was so far from being credulous that he habitually sought for corroboration of any important statement com-

¹ Mrs. J. A. Garfield, 1912.

ing from any source. This was part of his intellectual make-up, which was not, however, suspected by most of his associates.

It was the direct outgrowth of Garfield's friendliness of manner, his desire to please and his complete absence of self-assertiveness in any field as against his friends that led many to consider him positively weak in the hands of a more aggressive personality. J. W. Keifer remarked in his eulogy of 1885, "He was more inclined to yield to the demands of an imperious or dominating friend than to contend with him, though in the right."¹

Here again Garfield was misjudged by those who saw his honest desire to satisfy his friends, for in spite of the element of truth in this statement, his letters and diary reveal that he was perfectly capable of saying "No." He must have declined to grant scores upon scores of political favors to men who had only their desires for their recommendation. He nearly made an enemy of a strong political friend by refusing to jeopardize his own financial future through endorsing his note; and he did make a great many actual enemies of men in the district by declining to support their claims for office.

Such persons as a rule denounced him as hypocritical. So also did Congressmen who discovered that in spite of his personal friendliness he could not be counted on to vote for their particular private bills. "Garfield," commented Benjamin,² his classmate, "had a hearty, hale-fellow-well-met manner, apparently the out-spoken good nature of an honest, genial, democratic heart, which led many when he was in public life to consider him insincere, but my impression is, that there was originally no guile in the 'gush,' as it was called, which made him enemies at the height of his career because of the fact that his acts did not always tally with his professions. It was the natural manner of a person who was good-natured but not very deep." A fairer way of putting it would be to say that it was the manner of a person

¹ *Society of Army of Cumberland*, 1885, p. 131.

² S. G. W. Benjamin, *Recollections of a Free Lance*, p. 142.

who was good-natured but who declined to let friendliness push him into action which his judgment disapproved.

But while he was capable of courteous yielding to his friends or to other men in politics,—as his relations to Hayes in 1877 showed most strikingly,—there was a point beyond which he could not be pushed. An episode with Blaine, recorded in his journal of 1879, illustrates this capacity for drawing the line. The *North American Review* had arranged for a symposium of writers on the negro question with Garfield as one of the contributors and with Blaine to write a review and summary at the end. After Garfield had sent in his paper the editor appeared and explained that his article had taken the ground from under Blaine's feet and would make his summing up ineffective. Therefore he (Blaine) suggested that Garfield withdraw it. Garfield was frankly disgusted and refused to take any steps whatever. They might cancel his article to please Blaine, but he would not do so. The result was that Blaine had to yield. "On the whole," commented Garfield, "this little incident is a singular indication of the childishness and selfishness of Mr. Blaine. I regret it for his sake. I would withdraw my paper altogether but for the fact that I have already done too much complacent yielding to the demands of ambitious and aggressive friends; and that I think Blaine will respect me more for refusing to comply with his request."

Still it was out of Garfield's personal qualities that the episodes developed which proved to be the basis for the accusations of his enemies. It was out of his friendly acceptance of the honesty of Oakes Ames that he all but closed with his offer of *Crédit Mobilier* stock; it was because of his desire to accommodate Richard Parsons that he took, without question, the task of completing his work on behalf of the De Golyer pavement. In neither of these cases nor, still more, in the matter of the retroactive salary amendment, did he think particularly of the necessity of safeguarding his own personal interests from question. Garfield had very strict scruples as to what was fitting, but they all related to his own inner standards and were unrelated to the politician's usual criterion, that of winning popular approval.

His extreme carelessness regarding his "record" in these respects, his utter failure to realize the ruinous consequences that were likely to follow upon his neglect to defend himself against attack; his inability to appreciate inferences that would be drawn from his silence—all these were part of Garfield's fundamental make-up. That justice which he endeavored to give all men he expected without effort to receive at their hands. When he found himself attacked or hated, he seemed to be almost as much bewildered that such a thing could be possible as hurt by the revelation of unfairness. Living, as he said, in the open, before God and man, with nothing to conceal, it was inconceivable to him that any act of his should be condemned as either evil or unworthy.

Yet Garfield was not long in public life before he began to learn the bitter lesson that personal high-mindedness and frankness and devotion to duty were not the slightest protection against slander. The first revelation came in 1864, when, at the time of the nomination for Congress and simultaneously with an effort on the part of Hutchins and Cadwell to dislodge him, he was assailed with a dose of nauseous gossip. One Dr. Woodworth, a constituent, circulated the story that Garfield had been guilty of drunkenness in the army and was leading a life of profligacy at Washington.

To his wife Garfield wrote that the stories made him half sick. But what was he to do? Should he come out with denials, thus giving them still more circulation, or should he allow them to stand uncontradicted? He wrote to Austin in his distress (May 1, 1864): "I am vexed and grieved at the story you have heard. I have not the remotest idea of the foundation of it. Dr. Woodworth I do not know. I do not remember ever to have seen him. . . . If his story will injure me, I shall have to suffer it. If I am open to these reports then no man is safe. I would put this man to the proof were it not for one thing. I long ago said to myself there were two courses before any man who hoped to do anything in the world. One was to turn aside and kick every dog that barks which would cost a good deal of precious time. The other was to go on one's way and if possible get out of the reach both of the dog and his bark. I have tried to follow the latter

course and I believe I have gained by it. . . . I dont know any other foundation for any part of the story than the fact that I have sometimes played cards as an amusement with a friend and I have sometimes tasted wine at the table of a friend. . . . Very few times in my life have I used any words of profanity, never any, as I can remember, since I became a member of the Christian church, certainly none for many years. I should have to make a special effort to remember to swear, had I no principle against it."

The vitality of a piece of slander is something beyond all imagination. In 1868, when the time approached for Garfield's renomination, the same story reappeared with additions and embellishments. Rhodes wrote to him ironically (June 25), "You gambler, you rake, you are immensely wealthy out of jobs and frauds and the devil only knows what else." At the nominating convention his enemies from Warren, as a political supporter, Eben Newton of Canfield, wrote (June 25, 1868), "make any and every kind of charge against you that could be imagined." He recounted several accusing him of licentiousness and drunkenness, and continued, "They say you kept the tax on petroleum down to help the Phillipses; that you are in the market for any kind of a bid that any one sees fit to make to you." Another wrote (J. Bruff, June 25): "I was not aware until the convention met what an immoral and unprincipled man I was supporting. . . . There has been a most villainously mean and filthy attack upon your personal character. I should advise you to devote a good portion of your time in the campaign in your own district that your people may become better acquainted with you, as these reports have little weight except where you are little known."

Writhing under these charges, Garfield wrote in great indignation to Newton (July 25): "I know it is not for any man to boast his virtues for the best of us has weaknesses and follies but this I can say and do say that I have tried to live and act as becomes a Christian man. I have lived and walked in open day, before all men, and I fearlessly appeal to all who know me for a refutation of these base and wicked lies. Each particular charge mentioned in your letter

is utterly and totally false. If any responsible man says they are true I will put him to the proof before the courts of my country. . . . In reference to the oil tax, I acted only by order and with the unanimous vote of the Committee of Ways and Means and the story that I received money or any consideration whatever for my action is false as the bottomless pit can make a story. The man does not live who will dare to look me in the face and say he ever made or heard made a corrupt or dishonorable proposition to me."

Two years later the slanderous stories took a new form which had been foreseen by Garfield. In telling Austin of his purpose to build a house in Washington (June 5, 1869) he remarked, "I presume this thing will be used by my enemies against me," and he was not disappointed. Six months afterwards, as the session of Congress opened, appeared an article in the Cincinnati *Enquirer* to the effect that he, by mysterious means, had been able to acquire riches in six years and build a \$40,000 house. It was strongly intimated that nothing but systematic corruption on his part could explain this sudden opulence.

Stung by these imputations, Garfield wrote to a number of his friends explaining precisely how much money he had in 1869 and how the so-called "\$40,000 house" cost, with the land, \$11,850, on which Garfield had paid less than half in cash, the rest being covered by a mortgage. "This," he wrote to Howells (December 23, 1869), "is the whole story; . . . I may be deceived but I do not believe there is a man who knows me in either branch of Congress, that would not say my whole career in Congress was wholly free from even a shadow of suspicion. But it is clear," he added, "that my enemies are trying to pave the way for a renewed attack on me next summer should I again be a candidate for re-election."

This last prophecy proved accurate, for as soon as the spring was well advanced and the effort of the "iron men" was under way to defeat Garfield in order to elect a stronger protectionist, out came the noisome scandals for another appearance. By this time Garfield was growing more philosophical. "It is singular," he wrote to a constituent (A. W.

Stiles, May 23), "how a certain class of people in the district revive and create slanders against me every two years. I am treated as a very respectable and moral man for about one and three quarters years and then come two or three months just previous to the nomination in which I am everything that is bad. This game has been played two or three times before and it ought to deprive those who are playing it of the respect of the people. My life has been lived in the open. My friends as well as my enemies are perfectly familiar with its details. The story that I am rich is so absurdly false that nobody that knows anything of the case and has any conscience will make such a statement."

There was little room for vindictiveness or bitterness in Garfield's nature. Acutely as he felt the pain of such charges, he rapidly recovered his spirits and his cheerfulness upon being reassured by his friends of their faith in his honor and manhood, and the evil moments vanished like mists of the night.

Yet a group of unreconciled enemies in his district, a good many Democratic rivals in the state and in Congress and the editors of a certain number of papers in various parts of the United States unquestionably believed him to be corrupt, venal and hypocritical, holding that all his kindness and courtesy, all his ready friendliness, all his uttered aspirations for fair, honorable and Christian behavior were nothing more than the mask behind which he concealed his weak, cowardly and self-seeking aims. It is in the pages of the *New York Sun* that one finds the fullest and ablest expression of this hostile conception of Garfield's character. It is impossible to exaggerate the skillful malice with which Dana reiterated and suggested, hinted at and alluded to these qualities. Assuming them to exist he explained every vote or word on the basis of the most contemptible motives, rarely denouncing or abusing, most commonly mentioning or taking for granted the personal worthlessness of the man he was discussing. Dana needed no facts to carry on his subtle and merciless campaign; for all he needed to do was to apply his canons of interpretation to admitted acts and speeches. Everything he assumed, hinted at or carelessly

mentioned was an invention of his fertile and skillful hate, capable of instant disproof by anyone knowing Garfield. But the readers of the *Sun* had no such opportunity to check his statements, nor did the readers of the numerous Democratic sheets who availed themselves of Dana's charges have any chance to know the other side.

It was one of fate's ironies that a favorite form of slander circulated about Garfield—favorite not merely in his case but in the case of many other happily married Washington figures—was to represent the existence of grave alienation between himself and his wife on account of his domestic infidelities. The attacks on Garfield's private morals seem to have been more active in the earlier stages of his public life, being replaced after 1873 by accusations of dishonesty based on the *Crédit Mobilier*, salary vote and De Golyer pavement affairs. Painful as this was, it at least gave Garfield a chance to defend himself against something tangible. But in 1879 Mrs. Garfield stumbled upon a story circulating among highly respectable people in Cleveland, which gave a detailed account of their domestic infelicity and included a dramatic episode supposed to have taken place between them in New York. Nothing, of course, could possibly have been more preposterous; it was, as Garfield and his wife remarked in the letters they interchanged on the subject (May 20), "a lie out of whole cloth," so extravagant that neither could conjecture any possible basis. Yet when they tried to ferret out the alleged author in Washington they encountered nothing but injured innocence and denials. It was, in fact, utterly impossible to kill such a story, once it was started, as it would be necessary to exterminate the vast number of persons who derive a distinct pleasure from believing stories of this kind about prominent people. There was nothing to be done. So the story lived and was in circulation, in exactly the same form, in 1921, forty years after Garfield was in his grave.

Another version of the story, which became widely believed, was to the effect that a suit for divorce had been initiated by Mrs. Garfield in 1880, but was withdrawn after her husband's nomination for the presidency, in order not

to blast his career. A single glance at the letters interchanged between the two at that time—May and June, 1880—is sufficient to disprove it.¹

Against this kind of attack, the “whispering” attack on character, a man like Garfield had no protection or defense except the affection and confidence of the men who did know him and did trust him. The only way he could prove his sincerity and real uprightness was by living it. Another man, a hard fighter, could have taken the offensive, could have asserted and maintained his own rectitude against attacks; but that was the one thing into which Garfield had to be driven, and which—when he made the effort—invariably was less effective than another man would have made it.

President Hayes laid his finger on this as the real defect in Garfield’s character:² “He leaned on others—could not face a frowning world; his habits suffered from Washington life. His course at various times when trouble came betrayed weakness. The Credit Mobilier, the De Golyer business . . . place him in another list from Lincoln, Clay, Sumner and all the other heroes of our civil history.” Donn Piatt, sketching Garfield’s political career, said much the same thing, at greater length. “Sensitive as a girl,” he wrote (June, 1880), “he suffers horribly not only from the assaults of his political opponents, but the rough and tumble conduct of his own side. ‘He rushes into a fight,’ said Jere Black, ‘with the horns of a bull and the skin of a rabbit.’ Nothing but the highest courage forces him into the contests of the House, where all the learning, eloquence, all thought, are lost in the vilest personalities and the lowest partisan conflicts. . . . The only evidence against Garfield in that Credit Mobilier exposure was the manner in which he shrunk from public gaze when the charge was made.”

Nevertheless, it is to be borne in mind that this lack of defensive pugnacity, this lack of worldly wisdom and this sensitiveness, did not, after all, prevent him from holding the political control of his district, from rising to a position of the first importance in Congress, from securing an unop-

¹ See pp. 926, 960, 965, 967, 976, 977.

² Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 364.

posed election to the Senate from his state and—most important of all—from retaining, against all the sneers of the *Sun* and all the attacks of enemies, the love and trust of thousands.

Anyone who reads the hundreds of pages of Garfield's journal and the hundreds upon hundreds of letters written by him to wife, family, colleagues, friends, acquaintances, gains an impression of a fine and simple integrity in the man. There is no trace or shadow of anything but the same personality, the same mentality, in every sort of writing left by him. And upon himself and his status in the world he reflected and wrote with the same candor that distinguished his other observations, sustained in every aspect of his life by a profound sense of personal rectitude. He frequently said, "I may be mistaken"; he never admitted having done conscious wrong. There was in this no conceit, no self-righteousness, no trace of moral superiority,—nothing but a habit of mind and conscience that persisted from his early youth. And it was only to intimate friends and when moved to expression that he showed this feeling. To Captain Plumb he wrote, in a letter of condolence (February 20, 1872), "My life here is a hard one full of grinding work, but I am trying to keep my head up in the light and to walk in the path of duty, obeying my convictions of right without much regard for results."

The laborious and distasteful aspects of public life led Garfield from an early date to consider the possibility of leaving it for the law, but he never could bring himself to the point of actually carrying out the idea. The game of politics was too interesting, he was conscious of success at the moment and he always saw hopes of greater success looming in the future. Some of his letters show this clearly. He wrote to Rhodes (May 25, 1868): "Why dont I leave politics and go to the law? A most sensible question. Would that I could give a sensible answer. The most sensible thing I can say on the negative is that I have changed pursuits so often that I ought to follow one thing till I make it amount to something and I have some hope that in a few years I may make myself strong and a power in the field I am now cultivating."

Two years later, when political results seemed to keep at a distance and the "iron men" were threatening to defeat him for reelection, his idea of taking refuge in the law grew much more distinct. He still wrote to various correspondents that his political duties stood in the way. "I have for several years," he said to one (N. B. Jenkins, February 12), "felt as though I ought to quit public life and go into the profession of law, towards laying up something for a rainy day. But still as I have gone into congressional life and have been steadily increasing in Congressional influence in the House, I feel that I can accomplish more now as a member of Congress than at any time previous." In his New Year's letter to Hinsdale he said (January 10, 1870): "This storm in which I am living makes me sometimes long with infinite yearnings for a quiet place to study and work away from the roar and unrest of public life. But I suppose I shall go on for a while yet in the dusty highway of politics; possibly, though I hope not, until green fields and quiet skies shall cease to delight me." Later in the same year he received from his old Forty-second friend, Plumb, an interesting letter (March 6, 1870). "I dare assert," he said, "that if you were left to an untrammelled choice you would to-day prefer to plod in the field of scientific research to store your mind with data wherewith to solve the greater problems of matter, of mind and of God. . . . Now, my dear General, if I were with you, my theme would not be coal mines nor specie payments, nor tariffs, but it would be this physical universe and its relation to God." To this Garfield, from the midst of his Congressional labors, responded (March 23): "You do not know how completely you described my experience and reflections in the words you wrote. I look up in the midst of the turmoil and vexations of political life almost every day and long for deliverance from it. I can understand why the Carpenter of Nazareth frequently went into the mountain apart. I sigh for the top of the mountain where, beyond the noise and tumult of life and its petty wrangling, I may rest and may study the problem that concerns a man's soul, the problem you touch upon in your letter, 'The mystery of life.' How shall we fathom it? and yet

its study is fascinating in the highest degree. . . . I cannot tell you how much I would love to sit down with you and let our hearts go wandering out into the fields of thought which I can only dream now in fragmentary moments snatched from business. But after all," he added as usual, "it is not unlikely that I should long to plunge again into the thick of the battle and try to [know] life in the concrete as we see it among the crowds."

It was not to be expected that Garfield should deliberately make such a change as that involved in withdrawing from public life. His character and his habits stood in the way of dropping any occupation in which he was making a success, even if the obvious reasons were all in favor of his so doing. A year later he was still undecided and wrote a little ruefully to V. P. Kline (July 21), describing the effect upon himself of reading a history of the French Revolution: "It has so fascinated me that I have hardly lived among mortals but among ghosts, shadows and withal some terrible realities. After such a review I come back to the tame questions of American politics and feel my fast growing conviction strengthened that politicians and parties are in the main but sticks and bubbles, whirling along on the great current of events, and that things are shaping themselves in obedience to titanic forces whose movements we may modify a little but which we neither create nor control. . . . About half the year I am sighing to be out of politics and in the law. The other half I am in the storm, keeping my head from being smashed and trying to do what little I can in a way not to be ashamed of when the masquerade is over."

What held Garfield back was partly no doubt his constitutional dislike of making any change, but still more his feeling that he was making a success of Congressional life. Nothing is clearer than that Garfield constantly felt that he was growing more and more in influence and was gaining constantly in power for good among his colleagues. Conceit was never a trait of Garfield's. He was ready to listen to criticism and he took it admirably. But he was always self-confident and always hopeful about himself and inclined to think that other people had the same friendly attitude

toward him that he did toward them. It is not too much to say that Garfield looked for the test of his success to the effect of his speeches, whether in the House, on the stump or in the lecture hall. He was first and foremost a speaker, an orator, a debater, and in his own speaking and its effect he took interest beyond anything else.

What Garfield seems to have meant by his constant report that he is "gaining in influence in the House" was not that he was securing a position of command or personal authority but that he was getting the reputation of a powerful speaker and debater. In the session of 1868, for instance, when he was not only thoroughly defeated in all his efforts for sound finance, but had his army bill ruined, he wrote to correspondents explaining that he could not afford to return to the district on the ground that he "never had so much influence as now." This appears to mean that never before had he attracted so much favorable notice from Congressmen and economists as he then did by his speech of May 15. He said the same thing in 1870, when he was unable to control the House in regard to his banking bill and saw his measure saved only by the Senate. Approval by the people whose judgment he valued and, beyond that, the feeling that he was aiding in forming and directing sentiment were what satisfied him in those days. For defeat he cared little.

After 1873, however, this optimistic, almost unworldly, attitude of Garfield toward his own standing and his own career was severely shaken by the mortifications and humiliations of the *Crédit Mobilier* and salary controversies, which left him with a tinge of sadness that was never wholly shaken off. The way in which he sought to profit, morally, from the *Crédit Mobilier* episode has already been shown in sundry letters. Another letter to his wife, in April, 1873, at the height of the salary excitement, shows the same effort at learning through pain. "I mean to try if possible," he wrote to her, "to turn all these trials to some good account in the way of personal discipline and culture. I hope to be hereafter less dependent upon the applause of others. It will be hard to live so much more alone than I have done but I doubt not it will be better for me."

At the same time he felt, as most men do, the sense that, after all, his achievements had not been equal to his ambitions. In commenting on his birthday (November 19, 1874) he wrote: "While my life has been a very busy one I feel keenly that I have accomplished but little. So many fields of thought I have left untouched; so many plans of culture are 'asides' in which I attempt to do something outside of my regular work." On January 1, 1875, he made this entry: "I fear that these two years have taken away something from my cheerfulness and buoyancy of spirit. I shall try to resist the shadows and court the sunshine." Two years later, writing to Austin (June 11, 1877), he reflected: "I think I love my true and tried friends more than ever. But I am not sure but the constant assaults of enemies, the false and unreasonable attacks which the newspapers keep up are tending to freeze the free and happy spirit which is natural to me. I shudder at such a result."

As time went on, the sense fastened upon him that he was not really directing his own course of life, but had been swayed constantly by circumstance and the needs or desires of others. In his annual letter to Hinsdale of 1877 (January 4) he said, looking back on his own career: "I have reflected much upon the fortune that has driven me so far from what I purposed to become, in my early life, and have been pushed to the sad conclusion, that I must abandon a large share of the things I once hoped to achieve. When I reflect that it is now more than sixteen years since I have been, for a moment, free from the responsibilities of public place, I seem to have become the slave of others, and hardly at all free to follow the plans of personal culture of which I once dreamed and hoped. . . . In my public life, I think the last year has brought me some gain in the way of recovering from the clouds and darkness that fell around me three years ago and also in the development of personal power among my fellows. It has also brought some sombre reflections of what might have been, if no clouds had ever come." On his forty-sixth birthday, November 19, 1877, Garfield began philosophically to welcome old age. "I have passed the recognized meridian of life," he wrote. "For the future I suppose I

must draw upon what I have accumulated in the way of intellectual stores to make up for failing enterprise and vital energy."

For this kindly lovable man, this companion of his children and sharer of everything with his wife, the end of all the busy happy days was close at hand. Before him, as he took the train for the West, wholly unknown to him lay but one brief year and a half of life, in which fate was to bring him in rapid succession every conceivable test of character and of capacity, to offer him power, to tempt him with every sort of flattery and finally to crush him under utter tragedy.

CHAPTER XXV
THE NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY
1879-1880

THE fifteen months between June, 1880, and September, 1881, comprise that part of Garfield's life through which his name is inevitably connected with the history of the United States; for it was within this time that he was nominated for the presidency, was elected to it, was inaugurated, served a few months, was shot by an assassin, lingered seventy-nine days between life and death and finally expired September 19 amid the tears and sympathy of the country and of the whole civilized world.

At the same time he had become involved in one of the most celebrated political quarrels in American history and had been forced to take issue with both friends and opponents in the Senate on the point of executive authority over appointments. At the time he was shot he was being execrated by large elements of his own party as weak, perfidious and mendacious; accusations which have been handed on in books and articles inspired by these elements and have found their place in much of the history written about the period. In view of the cardinal importance of this closing year in his life, it is fitting that the events and moving forces behind them should be carefully studied and weighed, with the utmost effort at accuracy and at fairness not only to him but to all concerned, since nearly every step is involved in controversy.

The first act in the drama of these fifteen months deals with the nomination of Garfield for the presidency in 1880, and especially with his own part in what appeared at the time to be the sudden and unexpected outcome of a bitterly fought contest in the Republican convention. To begin with it is to be borne in mind that Garfield seems to have been almost wholly without ambition for the presidency. Ex-

tracts from sundry letters will illustrate his attitude. On December 14, 1872, he wrote to a Wisconsin man (Dr. H. P. Gatchell of Kenosha), who had said (November 9, 1872), "No public man is marching so straight toward the Presidency, never making a misstep." "I hope and believe that I shall never be smitten with the presidential disease. That prize is too much of a lottery for any man to set his heart on it. I think it is better to deserve the place than to reach it." The first considerable mention of it in his correspondence came as early as 1875, when, during the discussion of the third term and of the succession to Grant, his wife wrote the following interesting letter to him (April 25): "It seems to me there is very little now to tempt a man to go into the contest for the presidency. If it could be possible for any one to so tower above all others in true manliness and statesmanship that the people should demand him for their head such an one might accept the place with some gratification. It may be only a wife's fancy for the man she truly loves, and knows to be worthy of honor but I have a very deep feeling that if there is such an one in the world you are that one, and I somehow feel that both the real and the accidental occurrences of your life which seem to hold you aloof from so many political circles are all, in a quiet way, singling you out from the wrestling, struggling throng. To me it seems the benign care of the far-seeing spirit guarding you from the temptations to throw yourself into the scramble for place and power and preserving you for that time when you shall become

The pillar of a people's hope
The centre of a world's desire."

Garfield's reply showed him quite unimpressed even with this dream. All that he said was (May 5, 1875): "I agree with you that shoving for the place is not a very safe means to secure it. I, at least, have been successful in keeping the maggot out of my brain."

He had, of course, admiring friends who from time to time told him that he was "presidential timber," and now and then some newspaper, in running through the available men

in "pivotal states," would mention his name; but to all such suggestions he remained wholly impervious. His comments in the journal and in letters upon the evil effect of Blaine's avowed candidacy upon his freedom of action as Speaker and as Senator, and especially upon popular judgment on his utterances, have been already quoted. Of course Garfield was rather pleased, it would appear, by the compliment implied in such suggestions and recorded them in his journal, although never with the eagerness with which he sought for appreciation of his speeches—that was a real goal of his ambition.

As the end of Hayes's term came in sight and a number of candidacies for the succession took shape, he again found himself appealed to by friends to permit his name to enter the contest. One of the persons who pressed this idea on him most persistently was President Hayes himself, who was not a candidate for reëlection and who seems to have suggested to Garfield on several occasions in 1878 and 1879 that by a proper playing of the cards he, Garfield, could secure the same prize that had just fallen to him. The journal for July 23, 1878, records this conversation with Hayes on the train from Ohio to Washington. "During the day the President said to me that the chief political mistake of my life was in refusing the governorship in 1867 and he thought I ought yet to take it. He intimated that it was the surest road to the Presidency."

The plan of running Garfield for governor in 1879 was taken up with zest by sundry Ohio leaders and, as described in an earlier chapter, forced him to make strenuous efforts to head it off. In connection with it, Hayes again brought forward his idea of the presidency as the real goal behind such a candidacy. "March 18 The President said the Convention would insist on my accepting the nomination. He thought I ought not to refuse. He believed it would not interfere with my senatorial prospects and perhaps would be the opening to a still higher place."

Sherman, on the other hand, who was getting ready to be a candidate for the presidential nomination was anxious that Garfield should not run for governor but aim instead for

the senatorship, doubtless for the reason that, if he carried Ohio as candidate, it might have the result Hayes was trying to accomplish. He undertook some cautious manœuvres, accordingly, to induce Garfield to leave him a clear field, making an indirect advance through his friend Thorpe. The latter reported to Garfield a conversation with Sherman (May 11) who had said he would not contest the senatorship with Garfield if he (Sherman) could get a solid delegation behind him for the presidency. This, according to Thorpe, was to induce Garfield not to contest the Ohio presidential support with Sherman. Sherman remarked, so Thorpe reported, that Garfield's best chance for the presidency was as a compromise candidate; that Sherman would not be easy to dislodge from the senatorship, but that if he had a solid Ohio delegation it could all, if necessary, be swung to Garfield. On that condition Sherman would not contest the senatorship. How much of this was Thorpe and how much Sherman cannot be certain, but it comports entirely with Sherman's subsequent action. Garfield, in sending Thorpe's letter to Austin, remarked tersely (May 13), "I shall make no deal with Sherman or anybody else," nor did he authorize Thorpe to give Sherman any assurances.

Presently Sherman took the matter up directly in a conversation reported by Garfield (May 26). "He said the effort to nominate Thurman is to compel our people to nominate him or me, that in either case the Ohio campaign will be understood to be a race for the Presidency. He thinks that neither of us should be a candidate in which opinion I agree. He thinks that such a contest at this time would encounter the opposition of the Grant men in Ohio, which he thinks would be unfortunate." Garfield peremptorily quashed the movement for his nomination, going to the convention to make absolutely sure. On July 1, as has been shown in Chapter XVIII, Sherman offered a clear field for Garfield in the senatorship, so far as he was concerned, with which the latter was wholly content.

In guiding Garfield's policy the presidential ambitions which Hayes strove to stimulate and Sherman was anxious to sidetrack certainly were not involved. In the journal for

February 5, 1879, he recorded a conversation on this subject with Sheldon and added his own reflections. "He insisted that my chances," wrote Garfield, "for the Presidency are better than any other man's except Grant's and possibly may be better than his. I ought to notice in this place that I am receiving a large number of letters from various parts of the country in regard to the Presidency. While I am not indifferent to the good opinion of men who think me fit for that high place, I am still wholly disinclined to believe that any result will come out of it other than some general talk. I have so long and so often seen the evil effects of the presidential fever upon my associates and friends that I am determined it shall not seize upon me, for in almost every case it impairs if it does not destroy the usefulness of its victim."

During the autumn of 1879 and the following winter the candidacies for the approaching convention rapidly took form and the Republican leaders and organization men in every state were actively pursued by the advocates of the leading aspirants. Blaine, of course, was again in the field, certain to have strong support from the western states and from scattered localities in the eastern ones. Probably Garfield would have been glad to see Blaine nominated, although he continued to disapprove of some of his methods. He wrote to Hinsdale (January 30, 1879): "Though I have long been warmly his friend, I have not been blind to his faults, which it seems to me are growing rather than decreasing. He seems to have undoubted faith in management, while I have but little, and I think his mind is warped by the constant pressure of the presidential idea upon him." Garfield was again prevented in 1880, as in 1876, from giving Blaine any open support, owing to the necessity of standing by the official candidate of his own state, who had been Hayes in 1876 and was now to be Sherman.

What lent a dramatic interest to the situation was the fact that the movement for a third term for Grant, which had been talked about in 1875, only to be dropped, was now revived with great intensity and, under the leadership of Conkling, Cameron and Logan, captured the party organizations in New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois, besides

drawing support from scores of southern Republicans in the former carpet-bag states. From September, 1879, when Grant, returning from his famous trip around the world, landed at San Francisco, the campaign for delegates was waged in his behalf with a skill and political ruthlessness that seemed for a time to be carrying all before it.

Confronted with this situation, Garfield's reason for supporting Sherman's candidacy was almost exactly what it had been for supporting Hayes's, namely, that it was a necessary device for the defeat of the third term movement. In addition, Garfield had come as near to a deal regarding the matter as he ever came in all his life when, during his own campaign for the Ohio senatorship, he had told Sherman's brother-in-law that his attitude toward Sherman's candidacy would be determined largely by the latter's attitude toward his own senatorial campaign.¹ Almost immediately he found himself under pressure to give positive assistance to Sherman's cause. He wrote to Captain Henry (December 8): "John Sherman is exceedingly anxious that I shall come out in a public letter favoring his candidacy for the Presidency. I have said to his friends that I am willing to aid in any proper way in giving him the Ohio delegation in the National Convention, but I do not think it wise to make any public declaration on the subject until after the Senatorial election. He is very anxious and his friends are pressing."

This was perfectly correct politics, as the game was played, but there was an element in the situation that Garfield was unable to control. Sherman was personally rather unpopular in the northern part of the state, and many individuals and not a few newspapers in this section had already begun to advocate Garfield himself as Ohio's real choice. His triumphant election to the senatorship set these people to speculating on his suitability as a presidential candidate. Typical editorials on this are in Garfield's scrapbooks. The *Ravenna Democrat* of January 21 proclaimed Garfield as a winning candidate. "It is not our understanding that General Garfield is in the least degree a seeker for the Presi-

¹ See p. 690.

dency. It is not necessary even to consult him. It is the duty of the party to command him." The *Ohio State Journal* of January 12 took a straw vote in the legislature for President and found a respectable minority favoring Garfield—Sherman 25, Blaine 8, Grant 8, Garfield 5. The *Norwalk Reflector* a little later printed a straw ballot—Grant 30, Garfield 30, Blaine 28, Sherman 7. The *Toledo Commercial* remarked (March 2), "General Garfield is not a candidate but the number who wish to see him a candidate is increasing daily." Presently newspapers outside Ohio began to take up the suggestion, such as the *New York Times*, the *Duluth Tribune*, the *Springfield Republican*.

It was high time for Garfield to take the situation in hand, so on January 26 he wrote to Senator R. A. Horr a letter, intended for publication, definitely committing himself to the support of Sherman for the presidency. He said of this to Henry (January 26): "It will put to rest the loose talk in the papers which is connecting my name with the Presidency just enough to embarrass me. I suppose my letter will offend Sheldon and a few others of my friends, but I cannot help it." The public letter said: "The vital question is, on what candidate can the Republicans of Ohio most cordially and effectively unite? I have no doubt that a decisive majority of our party in Ohio favors the nomination of John Sherman. He has earned this recognition at their hands by twenty-five years of conspicuous public service—a period which embraces nearly the whole life of the Republican party. He deserves the special recognition of the Nation for the great service he has rendered in making the resumption law a success, and placing the national finances on a better basis. I am aware that some Republicans do not endorse all his opinions. But no man who *has* opinions can expect the universal concurrence of his party in all his views; and no man without opinions is worthy the support of a great party. I hope the Republicans of Ohio will make no attack on other candidates. They should fairly and generously recognize the merits of all. But I think they ought to present the name of Mr. Sherman to the National Convention and give him their united and cordial support."

Unfortunately for Garfield's peace of mind, this letter failed entirely to "put to rest" the movement for him as a presidential candidate. He soon found that it was by no means confined to northern Ohio but had enthusiastic supporters in other states, hostile to both Grant and Blaine, who were determined that if a deadlock did ensue at the Republican National Convention, it should find an organized group ready to present his name. The first one noted in the journal was a Wisconsin admirer. "Feb. 11 Governor Pound called on me for a serious talk on the presidential question. He expressed the opinion that unless Grant was nominated with substantial unanimity he could not be elected and he believed neither Blaine nor Sherman could be. He furthermore expressed a belief that the Convention would be compelled to take up some other man and that I was likely to be its choice. He approved of the attitude I had taken on the subject, but wished me to hold myself free from any entanglements, so that should the contingency arise to which he referred I might be unfettered. I told him that I had observed the course of comments in the public press and in numerous letters which I had received, but that I did not regard the subject as at all serious, especially as it related to me. Nor did I believe that the matter would turn out as he expected; that whatever happened, I should act in perfect good faith towards Mr. Sherman and do nothing in the slightest degree that would interfere with his chances for success. At the same time I would consider such suggestions as he might make, always within the limitations just mentioned."

Precisely what Garfield meant by that last sentence can be surmised by one who is familiar with his peculiar and rather fine-drawn attitude toward any nomination for a new position. He would not ask for it, would not canvass for himself, would take it only if it was offered to him with no effort on his part, and, above all, he would not antagonize anybody as an aspirant. In this case, while he did not want the nomination nor seriously expect it, he might conceivably take it if it were offered him. At least such is the interpretation most easily put on his words.

A week later Wharton Barker of Harrisburg called to urge Canadian reciprocity, and presently opened up the subject of the presidency. "He told me also," recorded Garfield (February 18), "that they were organizing Young Republican Clubs in Pennsylvania; that they do not believe that either of the three candidates Grant, Blaine or Sherman can be elected and he and his friends are in favor of nominating me. I told him I would not be a candidate, and did not wish my name discussed in that connection, and if anything happened to me in that connection it would only be in case the Convention at Chicago could not nominate either of the candidates and I should do nothing to procure such a result; that I was working in good faith for Sherman and should continue to do so. . . . I should have added," he wrote later on under the same day, "in this connection that Mr. Sherman said in case he could not be nominated he preferred me to any other man and that he would be entirely willing to have his strength transferred to me."

This extract leaves no doubt but that Garfield, with his accustomed habits, was seeking to take a position that would be scrupulously loyal to his state candidate, Sherman, and disassociate himself from any "dark horse" movements. If persons wished to consider him as a dark horse, that was their affair,—his words to Barker seem to indicate that,—but he himself would have nothing to do with it. He would not permit himself to be a candidate. Probably Garfield did not consider the dark horse talk of any real moment at this time or he would have spoken with greater emphasis. As will be seen he showed greater and greater reluctance toward a nomination the more possible it began to appear.

In considering Garfield's attitude at this time, it is instructive to recall his behavior in a closely similar situation in 1870-1871, when there was a possibility of his contesting the Ohio senatorship with Sherman, the very man he was now officially supporting (Chapter XIV). Then, as in 1880, he was approached by a group which claimed to control the legislature and which desired him to come out openly as a candidate. Then, as later, he refused to consider himself a candidate at all unless in the exigency that there should be

no majority for Sherman and that the field should thus become open. So identical was his position that it clearly represented his deepest convictions as to political advancement. He would not announce in advance that he would under no circumstances accept an election or a nomination, but he would not personally permit his candidacy to be thrust into a situation where it would in any way divide the party or impair the chances of an established candidate.

Almost immediately it appeared that Sherman and his supporters were not content with Garfield's public statement but expected his actual assistance in getting delegates. The journal shows that on February 13 he "went to Secretary Sherman's at his request to consult with him on the political situation in Ohio," and a letter to Austin the next day shows the awkward position into which he was being forced. "John Sherman sent for me last evening," he reported February 14), "and said that he had heard that a strong movement was being made in Trumbull and Mahoning Counties in favor of Blaine and wanted my assistance to prevent a division of the Ohio delegation on the Presidential question. I write now to say that in view of the talk from various quarters of the country favoring me for the Presidency it will be very embarrassing should there appear a division in my congressional district. It would almost certainly be said that I had gotten up a division so as to break Sherman's strength and pave the way for a movement in my own favor. This I am anxious to prevent. I hope our Trumbull friends will see the propriety of giving Sherman their support. They can send men who are friendly to Blaine or any one else they please as second choice, so as to be ready to act in case they find Sherman cannot be nominated.

Four days later he wrote (February 17): "I called on Secretary Sherman at his request to confer about the condition of his canvass in Cleveland. It appears that there is much opposition to him in northern Ohio. I have agreed to help him." Accordingly, at the end of the month Garfield went back to Ohio and, after looking over his farm, had an interview with twelve or fifteen political leaders. "At the request of these persons," he records (February 27), "I

spoke a few minutes, giving my reasons why Grant ought not to be nominated and expressing the opinion that Ohio ought to give its vote to Sherman in order that he and Blaine might have strength enough to prevent the nomination of Grant. It is evident however, that it will be very difficult to carry this part of Ohio for Sherman."

By April the convention prospects were becoming clearer throughout the country. It was generally estimated by political observers that the Grant campaign, although pushed with immense energy, had failed to secure a majority of pledged delegates, and that in all probability no candidate would, at the start, have a commanding lead. This situation increased the possibility of a "dark horse" securing the nomination, and Garfield's name was increasingly mentioned, much to his discomfort. In April he found himself sharply assailed in various newspapers as the result of a widely distributed attack on him by the Rowell newspaper agency for having, as it was alleged, used his influence to prevent the reduction of the duty on wood pulp. His opinion on this in his journal (May 5) deserves noting. "I think it is an effort of some interested parties to hurt me just now, in view of some loose talk in the papers mentioning me as a dark horse."

When his mentor, Austin, brought up the subject in a letter, Garfield's reply took the same ground. "I have received a large number of letters from various parts of the country on the same subject, many of them very enthusiastic. Of course I am gratified at the demonstration of good feeling toward me, but I long ago made a resolution that I would never permit myself to let the Presidential fever get any lodgment in my brain. I think it is the one office in this nation that for his own peace no man ought to set his heart upon. Of course it is entirely proper for a man's friends to canvass the subject and take whatever action they think best, but I do not believe that the elements for 1880 are likely to be controlled by any management hostile to Grant." (April 20.)

In the midst of this, Garfield's personal preference was for a policy of keeping absolutely still and attending strictly to his own business, in the committee room and on the floor of

the House. The last thing he wanted to do was to assume charge of Sherman's candidacy at the Republican convention, but the pressure was strong to force him into that position. The Sherman managers wished to concentrate all the political strength of the state behind their candidate, the more especially since Garfield, if present at the convention as Sherman's supporter, could not regularly be a candidate. At the same time, Garfield's admirers wished him to attend, in order that his presence might advertise his fitness for the rôle of dark horse.

In a letter printed in his *Recollections*¹ Sherman went far in putting pressure on Garfield by writing to him through an unnamed intermediary. "There is a strong feeling that Garfield, in order to save his district, should go to the Chicago convention as a delegate. He is placed in a very awkward attitude now. If this district should be against my nomination it would be attributed to either want of influence on his part, or, what is worse, a want of sincerity in my support. In view of the past this would be a very unfortunate thing for him. This is a delicate matter for me to take part in and I leave it entirely to your good judgment." (April 8.)

This very pointed opinion was promptly transmitted to Garfield, who turned for help to his friend Austin. He wrote (April 16): "I am between two fires. One set of people, Sherman's supporters, insist that I shall go as a delegate to the Chicago Convention from the Nineteenth District. This they said nothing of until two weeks ago, by which time I had already answered a number of gentlemen from the District who wished to be candidates, that I would not be in their way. . . . I will not offer myself as a candidate nor decline if it is tendered me. On many accounts I would be embarrassed to go to Chicago, while on the other hand, I do not wish to shirk the responsibility nor appear to be negligent of Sherman's interests. While I do not think he has much of a chance, if any, of the nomination, I still think, if we want to prevent Grant's nomination, we ought to give Ohio to Sherman. Keep an eye on the doings of the conven-

¹ Vol. II, p. 177.

tion that meets in Warren and do not allow me to be put in a false position." A few days later he wrote Hinsdale (April 21): "I have refused to be a delegate from the district, but I think it likely that the State Convention will elect me a delegate at large. I prefer not to go at all, but if I am chosen I suppose I had better go."

He also took pains to reassure Sherman in person, for the latter wrote in his *Recollections*:¹ "Prior to the state convention I had an interview with General Garfield which he sought at my office in the department, and he there expressed his earnest desire to secure my nomination and his wish to be a delegate at large so that he might aid me effectively." This does not appear in Garfield's journal, but a letter to Austin of April 19 shows that this interview was on April 17. As usual Garfield's account gives a different aspect from Sherman's. "I want my friends," he said, "to prevent my name being presented to the Warren Convention, as a delegate. If I go at all to the Chicago Convention, I ought to go as a Delegate at Large and Mr. Sherman said to me on Saturday that he understood that that arrangement was to be made."

On April 28 the Republican State Convention met at Columbus, with a great majority of Sherman supporters but a perceptible scattering of Blaine delegates. Garfield's journal records: "Received a long dispatch from Foster in regard to the State convention. Sherman called bringing several dispatches which he had received. Dennison, Bate-man, Foster and I were elected delegates at large. The convention was strongly in Sherman's favor."

At this moment Garfield's Pennsylvania admirer reappeared and was so positive in his predictions of a dark horse nomination that Garfield for the first time began to consider it seriously and to show signs of discomfort. The diary account (April 24) is worth quoting in full: "Mr. Wharton Barker of Philadelphia came and made a long statement of the political situation of which this is the substance. 'The "Independent Republicans" of Pennsylvania, headed by

¹ Vol. II, p. 771.

Wayne McVeagh and Barker, have secured McManes and his associates who have pledged a majority of the Pennsylvania delegates to oppose Grant at Chicago. This will make his nomination impossible and at first help Blaine. Then Massachusetts and nearly all of New England except Maine will throw its weight with New York against Blaine and break him. Pierrepont says, after Grant, Conkling will favor Garfield. Barker today visited the President who says Sherman is in the field to prevent the nomination of Grant or Blaine; that Garfield can carry Ohio solid as Blaine cannot, and in case the other two are broken, Sherman will give way for Garfield.' In short Barker thinks this is likely to be the outcome. I do not. I should be greatly distressed if I thought otherwise. There is too much possible work in me to set so near an end to it all as this would do."

In later years Barker asserted that his organization of the dark horse candidacy was made with Garfield's knowledge and approval and that the latter governed his conduct and utterances in accordance with Barker's suggestions. No sign of this appears in any of Garfield's contemporary writings, in his letters to Barker which were wholly devoted to Canadian reciprocity, or in his journal. In fact, all the evidence in existence shows that Garfield was not even a receptive candidate for the presidency, but tended to view the "dark horse" movement with disquiet if not actual alarm. He seems to have felt regarding it about as he did toward the Ohio governorship—that he did not want it, and was not a candidate for it, but could not absolutely say in advance that he would not take it, since it was conceivable that his party might really need him in that position to carry the state.

As usual, Blaine confided freely to Garfield his presidential aspirations. "April 14 Talked half an hour with Blaine on the Presidency. He is bitter toward Sherman; says the letter of the latter which introduced Hayes as a candidate was a blow at him [Blaine] and that now Sherman prefers Grant to Blaine. Blaine thinks Grant's nomination impossible; says it is currently reported that he was drunk on the way from Texas to New Orleans. On the whole I think that Blaine is now more confident of the nomination than I have

ever known him. I like Blaine, always have, and yet there is an element in him which I distrust." This is the same note constantly recurrent in Garfield's dealings with Blaine. A few days later (April 19), Garfield wrote in his journal another comment: "I spent an hour and a half in the Senate listening to Blaine's reply to Carpenter and other Senators who had assaulted him. He made a very brilliant speech, attacking one after another of his assailants. There was evidently a combination to overcome him, but he was more than a match for them all. It is not Blaine's forte to make a long, consistent, methodical argument analysing and establishing affirmative propositions, but he is the readiest man with the current facts of political history I have ever known and uses them in running debate with tremendous force and effectiveness. On the whole he is the completest gladiator in debate I know of."

A month later, after more delegates had been chosen, the somewhat mercurial nature of Blaine's temper is reflected in another entry in the journal. "May 23 At four o'clock I called on Blaine and we took a long walk in the grounds of the Naval Observatory. Blaine spoke very freely of the political situation. Said he did not much expect the nomination at Chicago and would not have become a candidate but for the belief that he could more effectually prevent the nomination of General Grant than any one else. On the whole he thought the nomination of Grant quite probable."

Meanwhile Garfield had accepted definitely, but without enthusiasm, the duties of advocate and spokesman for Sherman before the convention. On May 17 he had a long conference with the secretary and his managers and on May 25, just before departing for the convention, he had another. "Called on Secretary Sherman," the diary records, "and had a final interview in reference to his interests at Chicago. I asked him to suggest frankly what he considered the strong points of his public life that I might present them to the Convention in the strongest light. He said he left that wholly to my judgment, but suggested that the chief characteristic of his life from boyhood up had been courageous persistence in any course he had adopted." Garfield made no comment

on this observation, but it is likely that to his own mind none was needed, since the one quality he had not been able to discover in Sherman was that very element of courageous persistence!¹ He was in truth left to his own resources.

On May 25 Garfield left Washington and after spending a short time at the Mentor farm went on to Chicago. "I go with much reluctance," he entered in the journal (May 28), "for I dislike the antagonism and controversies which are likely to blaze out in the convention." He little realized that he was about to take part in what is probably the most famous nominating convention, considered as a political drama, that ever took place in the United States. Other conventions have settled problems vastly more important, but in none has the element of striking personal leadership played so large a part, and in none was the conclusion more suddenly dramatic. By the time he reached Chicago a deadlock was clearly foreshadowed and the interest of the entire country was focused on the coming contest, which was to be more than a merely friendly voting on a nomination. It was known that Grant and Blaine had each a large number of delegates, about three hundred but less than a half; that Sherman had something less than a hundred; and that two or three "favorite sons" controlled the remainder, hoping, no doubt, in case of a deadlock, to win votes as compromise candidates. It was also well known that the Blaine vote was widely scattered, appearing as minority groups or single delegates in many states, and the Sherman support was somewhat similar in character. Already it had been figured out that should the "unit rule" be enforced it would be quite possible for Grant to secure the nomination, even though controlling some seventy less votes than a majority. The unit rule, which was in effect in the Democratic party national conventions, provided for the casting of the vote of a state, not as the individual delegates chose, but as a block, the decision of the majority of the delegates from a state being decisive. If a state convention had instructed the vote to be cast in a block, it was customary in Democratic conventions to enforce those instructions. If this were to be

¹ See pp. 475, 476.

allowed to operate in this convention it would certainly permit the votes from New York and Illinois to be cast solid for Grant and perhaps from Pennsylvania, thereby adding sixty-three votes to his total. Apparently the only chance of defeating Grant lay in preventing the application of this political device. The newspapers were buzzing with gossip; the headquarters were nests of talk and intrigue.

Garfield instantly assumed a prominent part in the pre-convention negotiations. His journal for the day of May 29 summarizes his action: "Went to the Grand Pacific Hotel.

The city is full of Republicans and intense activity is seen in all the hostile camps. Put myself in communication with Governor Dennison, Bateman and Foster, my associate delegates at large, and before the day was over, urged them to take a bold and aggressive stand in favor of district representation and against the unit rule, and for this purpose that we unite with the friends of all candidates who take this view. The settlement of these principles is more important than the fate of any candidate. This view finally prevailed and the Blaine men co-operated." When the day was over Garfield wrote the following letter to his wife (May 29): "I find the city boiling over with politics. Everything is in the vague of vastness and uncertainty. No definite thing appears on the face of this chaos except the fact that the unit rule will be the center of battle and to that I expect to address myself. Whatever fight is in me I will make on that point."

The next day, May 30, was a Sunday. "At eleven," recorded Garfield, "went to Disciple Church on Indiana Ave. and 25th Street. A very small audience and a moderate sermon by the pastor. The remainder of the day was devoted to consultations and calls of friends." In other words, the program of uniting all elements against the possible effort of the Grant men to railroad through a nomination was actively prosecuted. Another note to his wife shows how Garfield felt on this second day (May 30): "Since I wrote you yesterday the turmoil has increased; though I begin to see the direction of the currents which are driving through the waste of waters that surround us. I suppose more than

a thousand people have talked to me today, and a still larger number have been introduced or recognized. All the elements indicate a convention full of strong and fierce antagonisms. The result is shrouded in all manner of doubt. . . . Every hour I long to be away from this turmoil and with you in our dear home."

On Monday, the thirty-first, the pressure increased. "Fresh crowds arriving by every train and the interest increasing every hour. Grant men and Blaine men very confident. . . . I am strongly urged to make a speech against the third term at mass meeting tonight. I decline, the fight of delegates should be in the convention. I never fight mock battles." By the end of the day the situation was becoming clarified for Garfield, since, contrary to all his desires and intentions, he found himself one of a group, in some ways the most conspicuous of them, who assumed the burden of the contest against the Grant triumvirate of Conkling, Logan and Cameron. These three together made a formidable combination. Through the control of their state machines they had driven the campaign for delegates with merciless thoroughness, overriding the efforts of districts to send anti-Grant delegates, and they were suspected of a willingness to apply similar methods now. If aggressive personal force, skill in parliamentary manoeuvring and oratory could win, this group was in a position to do so. The only danger was that by an overindulgence in parliamentary ruthlessness they might create a reaction against their candidate, whose greatest hold lay in his tradition and military personality. This was particularly true of Conkling, a man in whom the combative tendencies were those which were principally challenged by the situation and whose instincts were toward crushing opposition rather than avoiding or conciliating it.

If there had been a personality of equal force at the head of the Blaine contingent the leadership in the contest would undoubtedly have fallen to him, for it was between the Blaine and the Grant candidacies that no possible compromise or truce could exist. An extreme personal bitterness between Blaine and Conkling underlay the whole situation.

But no one of the Blaine managers rose to the necessities of the case, for neither Hale nor Frye was Conkling's equal as a convention orator. By May 31 and June 1 it was evident that upon Garfield, the most prominent of the Sherman delegates, was devolving the leadership of the united anti-Grant forces. The newspaper comments of those days and the recollections of delegates show this clearly. The leader of the Republican party in the House of Representatives was the man to direct the contest against the group of masterful Senators.

With the assumption of this position, Garfield took the fateful step which was destined to lead him into unexampled political difficulties and ultimately to bring on tragedy, for by so doing he set himself squarely across the political path of Roscoe Conkling. Because of the importance of this decision it is necessary to pause, before following the course of the convention, and analyze clearly the precise situation into which Garfield felt compelled to thrust himself.

Conkling was a political leader of a type almost peculiar to New York. Ever since the second election of Grant he had been the recognized "boss" of the Republican party in his state, controlling it through a perfected "machine." "About half a dozen able lieutenants, holding fat offices in the great patronage centres, revolved with the fidelity of planets, while in every custom-house and federal office in the State trained politicians performed the function of satellites."¹ "He relied upon public patronage as an instrument of party and factional success and uniformly employed it throughout his career." Like many bosses he preferred to work through agents, and to let his bargaining be done for him, reserving himself for conspicuous appearances at conventions or on the stump where he was a powerful and hard-hitting speaker. Unlike many bosses, however, he was extremely masterful and intolerant of opposition, prone to detect personal slights and excessively ready to quarrel. He was at his best, as orator or debater, when inspired by

¹ D. S. Alexander, *History of the State of New York*, Vol. III, p. 316.

hatred or anger; then his tongue was loosened in a flow of eloquent denunciation, scorn or invective.

A "boss" of this type could frequently terrify or crush opposition, but he also tended to create it, and so Conkling's days of power were marked by constantly recurring combats with the less well-organized but strongly recalcitrant "better element" in the party. Several times George William Curtis, boldly leading a minority, had directly assailed the Senator at state conventions, and, though always beaten by the power of votes, remained a wholly unreconciled antagonist.

Under these circumstances the power of the Senator to control all federal patronage within the state was, in his opinion and that of all his fellow workers, absolutely essential. During Grant's terms this power was undisturbed, but when Hayes became President a new element entered into the situation. In 1877, with the intention of reforming long-established abuses in the New York custom house, Hayes, acting for Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, removed C. A. Arthur and A. B. Cornell from the positions of collector and naval officer, where, as prominent members of the Conkling machine, they were making the customary employment of the offices at their disposal. For their places James Roosevelt and L. B. Prince were nominated. Conkling, who had already given utterance to sharp criticism of Hayes's policies, now went into open opposition on the point of his right to control all such offices in New York, and succeeded in inducing the Senate to reject both nominations.

Returning to the attack in the summer of 1878, Hayes suspended Arthur and Cornell a second time and appointed E. A. Merritt and S. W. Burt in their places. When Congress met, Conkling again prepared to defeat the nominations, but this time Sherman took the aggressive and insisted that the administration should have the right to install its own choice in that custom house. He threatened to resign if the nomination was again defeated¹ and put pressure on individual Senators, besides sending a formal communication to the Senate as a body. On February 3, in spite of a bitter attack on the President by Conkling, enough Republicans

¹ *John Sherman's Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 683.

joined with the great majority of the Democrats to vote for confirmation and Conkling was beaten. Merritt and Burt remained in the custom house and Arthur and Cornell, agents of the Conkling machine, were ejected.

Encouraged by this blow the antimachine elements of the party made a sharp fight in two successive state conventions, the vote each time revealing that Conkling's hold was narrow. In September, 1879, Conkling's man, Cornell, secured the nomination for governor by 234 against 216, divided among four candidates, of whom W. H. Robertson was the most prominent. Five months later, on February 25, 1880, Conkling tried to control all of the New York delegates to the national convention by offering a resolution in the state convention instructing them to support the nomination of Grant. This was carried 216 to 183 and, it was claimed, overrode any preferences which might have been expressed in the election of district delegates, but against this a revolt promptly broke out, led by important newspapers in all parts of the state. During the weeks before the meeting at Chicago a considerable number of delegates, prominent among them the W. H. Robertson who had contested the machine nomination for governor, announced that they would not obey the so-called instructions.¹

The adoption of the unit rule bore for Conkling, accordingly, a peculiarly personal aspect. Anxious as he was to secure Grant's nomination by means of it, he was still more eager to enforce it as a means of asserting his domination over a faction that had presumed to defy his control. He wished to extirpate, politically, the precise men who would be enabled, if the unit rule were defeated, to repudiate his leadership. When Garfield assailed the unit rule, his action bore to Conkling the aspect of an intolerable intrusion into New York politics, an effort to assist the "Independents" in violating instructions that ought properly to bind and control them, and for this Conkling never forgave him, as will be abundantly shown later.

On June 1 Garfield, as spokesman of the anti-Grant coalition, assumed the leadership in opening negotiations with

¹ Alexander, *History of New York*, Vol. III, pp. 436-437.

the Grant group. His journal gives the summary. "The active work of our delegation today," he wrote, "was devoted to the subject of the temporary organization. There is danger that Cameron will apply the unit rule in the organization of the Convention and thus assume its existence without the authority of the Convention. I called on Senator Conkling and suggested that a temporary chairman might be agreed upon by the opposing forces and thus avoid a contest before rules were reported. He did not appear willing to take much responsibility for his followers. We suggested Senator Hoar for temporary chairman. This was found later in the day to be unacceptable to the Grant men. A long and unpleasant controversy was had in the National Committee. Cameron refused to put some motions or to allow an appeal from his decision." In this extract appears the characteristic behavior of Conkling, who declined to assume any responsibility or to take any action that would commit himself or his followers. He intended to win in the convention and had no intention of agreeing to forego any possible advantage. The action of Cameron, chairman of the National Committee, stirred the liveliest fears of usurpation on his part or on the part of any temporary chairman who might be acceptable to the Grant group. What was feared was that Cameron, or any chairman of the convention from the Grant faction, might try to establish the unit rule by a bold assertion of power as presiding officer. Machine legislative politics, in its most extreme form, seemed to impend over the situation.

Side by side with this contest another element appeared in the situation, which was beginning to cause Garfield the greatest disquiet, namely, the rapid growth of the movement to utilize him as a compromise candidate for the presidency, in case the Grant-Blaine situation developed into a deadlock. This was common talk among the delegates, and was actively urged by the small group of "original Garfield men." He described the situation in an interesting letter to his wife (May 31).

"Another day nearly over," he wrote, "full of the extraordinary passion, suspicion and excitement of this convention.

I have tried to keep my head cool; and have sailed rather steadily over its rough seas, yet all the while longing for land—especially the little farm where my hopes and loves are centered. I begin to feel quite confident that neither Grant nor Blaine can get the nomination, and I fear that the bitterness already engendered and yet to be, will make it impossible for the convention to restore harmony to the party. You can hardly imagine the embarrassment I have been in from the moment of my arrival here, by the number of delegates from all quarters who are openly expressing the wish that I was the Ohio candidate. So much of this is said as to put me in constant danger of being suspected of ambitious designs; but I think I have been so prudent as thus far to disarm most of the suspicious ones. I shall do no act that will in the smallest degree be untrue to myself or my associates, and I do not expect that anything will come out of the deeps to me. But I am greatly surprised at the number of prominent delegates who want to bring out my name. Many are firmly of the belief that all the candidates will be dropped and that I will be taken up. I hope you do not think I am disturbed by this, or in the slightest degree elated. I shall do and ask nothing,—far better pleased to have nothing, but the knowledge that many desire me.” On June 2 he ended a brief note this way: “The belief that the nomination will come to me increases in many minds, but I do not believe it. If I were well out of this strait and with you I should be happy.”

The Cleveland *Herald* reporter wrote, June 2: “A Garfield tide is rising in the west. Some of the Iowa delegates told me this A.M. that they stood ready to support Garfield should his name be proposed in the convention. . . . This I find to be equally true of other western states but they have met with no encouragement from the Ohio delegation.” The intensely awkward part was that if Garfield made himself at all prominent in the convention, as the leader of the Republican minority in the House could hardly fail of doing, he would be suspected of trying to advertise himself, even if he did it in the interests of Sherman’s candidacy; while if he hung back he would be accused of half-hearted-

ness in support of Sherman if not of actual disloyalty. Whatever he did would be misjudged and was, in fact, so estimated.

On June 2 at noon the convention was called to order, and by this time the reluctant Grant men had found it necessary to come to a compromise on the question of the presiding officer and on the unit rule. It was agreed to take Senator G. F. Hoar of Massachusetts as permanent chairman and to let the unit rule be voted on by the convention, thus avoiding a bitter contest at the outset, in which the party itself might have been split. So Cameron, having called the meeting to order, proposed Senator G. F. Hoar as temporary chairman and he was elected unanimously. The only business transacted was the appointment of committees on Credentials, Resolutions, Permanent Organization and Rules, on which each state delegation named a member. Garfield, as the leader in the fight against the unit rule, was named by Ohio delegates to represent that state on the Committee on Rules. This put him in a strategic position, which he used to the full extent.

During this purely routine work the delegates sought opportunities to express their feelings. "When the names of Senator Conkling and General Garfield were reached by the secretary in calling the committees," said the *Cleveland Leader* of June 2, "there was loud cheering which was repeated with great heartiness." The *Cleveland Herald* added: "The announcement of Garfield's name caused not only applause but cheers, more so than that of any other . . . not even excepting Conkling. If his name is ever proposed in the Convention as a presidential candidate it will cause a loud uproar of enthusiasm even though it should fail of sufficient votes to elect."

There was unquestionably a small but energetic Garfield "claque" organized, who started "demonstrations" for him every now and then. One such case was referred to in the quotation just given. J. F. Rhodes¹ refers to another: "When Conkling, early on the second day, was arguing in favor of his motion for a recess, Garfield, the time of whose

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 117.

entrance had perhaps been craftily arranged, entered the hall, eliciting a burst of cheers which drowned Conkling's voice." It may be safely assumed that Garfield was no party to any "crafty arrangement."

The fight of the field against Grant was now transferred to the Committee on Credentials and the Committee on Rules. Garfield was promptly chosen chairman of the latter and called his members into session that same evening. They finished their labors the next forenoon, only a few minutes before the convention reassembled at 11 a.m. On the third Garfield wrote to his wife: "The great peril of the preliminary organization was passed over yesterday in safety and we are getting out of early beds to approach the second danger which lives very near the core of the passion which fills this assembly in every vein, viz the discussion of the unit rule. After a long and earnest conference in a sitting of three hours, the committee on rules, of which I have been made chairman, has resolved to declare the right of each delegate to have his own vote counted as he gives it. This will encounter the fury of the Grant men who will insist that each vote from a state shall be counted as a majority of the delegates from that state may determine. The fate of Grant and the possible success of Conkling happen to be involved in this and hence we expect a fierce fight which I must probably bear the brunt of. Since I wrote you yesterday morning the signs have multiplied that the convention is strongly turning its attention to me. Large numbers of men are confident that will be the result. I should think there was something in it but for the contest I am to have with Conkling. If I win that fight it will be likely to embitter him and his followers against me. If I lose it the convention will lose interest in me. So I am between two fires. I take to myself the lesson I lately wrote to Hal, and say, I will do my whole duty as I see it, and take the result as an indication of what is best. You can never know how much I need you during these days of storm. Every hour I want to go and state some case to your judgment. I am happy in expecting no lightning to strike me, but am gratified that so many here think it will. When my name was called yesterday in the Conven-

tion as a member of a committee there was a great and unexpected demonstration. When I am safely with you again my joy will be full."

In the official report of the proceedings one can see Garfield acting very much as he had grown accustomed to act in the House. There was no rushing forward to speak, no challenging of personalities, but a strict adherence to rules and courtesy and a readiness to have everything settled by a fair vote. He tended to hold back until the time came to make a decisive motion or speech. On June 3, Senator Frye, a Blaine leader, moved that since the Committee on Credentials was not ready, the Committee on Rules be requested to report. Against this Sharpe of New York, representing the Grant men on the committee, protested, on the ground that the committee had agreed not to report until after the Committee on Credentials and further that he had not had time to draft a minority report. Garfield immediately rose and said that while the committee would act if so instructed by the convention he thought good faith with the minority required that they be allowed time to prepare their report. So Frye withdrew his motion and a recess was taken. Later in the day when the convention reassembled and found the Committee on Credentials still not ready, Henderson of Iowa, a state whose delegation was solid for Blaine, again moved to call for a report from the Committee on Rules. At once Senator Logan, for the Grant men, rose in wrath and a lively wrangle followed, in which the subject matter of the proposed rules—as yet not formally presented—was freely discussed. At the end Garfield rose and spoke once, very calmly, emphasizing that the convention could, if so minded, authorize any committee to report when desired and could at any time modify any rules adopted. On a motion made by one of the New York delegates and supported by Conkling in one of his rather aggressive speeches, that the Committee on Credentials instead of the Committee on Rules be requested to report, the first vote took place, in which the Grant men were beaten 318 to 406, showing a clear combination of all other elements against them. The motion for a report of the Rules Committee was then laid on the table,

it being generally felt that the report should not be dealt with until after the roll of delegates was settled.

On June 4 Garfield wrote home again, before setting out for the convention: "Our work here still drags its slow length along, through more passion than there was at Chickamauga. I have seen nothing like it in politics. It would take me a week to give you in writing any adequate description of the sweep and swirl of great forces and impulses concentrated here. As to myself, I have only time to say, that without any act or word of mine to induce it, there has been growing hourly a current of opinion which, were Ohio and I honorably free, might nominate me. As I am situated, until my full obligations are discharged, I would a thousand times rather help Sherman than to get it myself."

One draws the inference from the language of these intimate and perfectly confidential letters that Garfield's impressionable nature was stirred by the sudden appearance of the possibility that he might be nominated to the highest office in the country. No man, certainly not such a man as Garfield, could be indifferent to the tremendous compliment involved and the dramatic chances presented. But at the same time the letters show that his reason told him plainly how undesirable such a nomination would be on account of the dangerous situation it would create.

On this day, June 4, Garfield for his committee presented his report, and the Grant men submitted their minority report under a resolution providing that they should not be acted on until after the report of the Committee on Credentials was dealt with. Rule 8 of the Garfield report expressly provided for the right of each delegate to have his vote recorded for President or Vice-President, thereby prohibiting the unit rule. The minority report by its language still permitted the unit rule, by leaving the final determination of the vote cast to the chairman of each state delegation. If the state of things in the convention had remained the same when these were finally brought to a vote that it was on June 2, when the committees were organized, the vote on them would have been the decisive moment of the whole convention, but by that time so much had hap-

pened and the tide was so manifestly running against the Grant leaders, that their importance was greatly diminished.

In every national convention the emotional attitude of the delegates plays a part that increases in importance with every succeeding day. The crowd contagion works incessantly on the minds of men, rendering them increasingly subject to attractions and repulsions. They become more and more affected by the behavior of personal leaders, and more and more unstable in their support of their original candidates. In this particular convention it is the unanimous opinion of eyewitnesses that the personal bearing and language of Senator Conkling were a source of actual weakness to the side he represented. "From his first utterance in the convention to the last,¹ Mr. Conkling's manner was one studied taunt to his opponents. Nothing approaching it in arrogance and insolence has been witnessed in a political convention, either before or since. If there had been any chance of a compromise of one faction in favor of the other, he destroyed it utterly in the first half-hour."

On the first day of the convention a clash occurred between Frye and Conkling over a small point. "Conkling rose, instantly controlled the situation and answered Frye in a way that was a sneer and half an insult," said the *Cleveland Herald* reporter. "As to mental force, oratory, and self-control, the spokesman and leader of the Grant men is far in the fore. There is no one on the other side who can match him. Garfield comes the nearest."

Now on the third day, June 4, before any of the committees had reported, Conkling, in an effort to control and focus the sentiment of the convention, made a false step which led to his public acceptance of a defeat. Rising after the opening of the session he offered a resolution in which, after his favorite manner, he sought to coerce any of those present who might be considering bolting a third term nomination:² "*Resolved*: As the sense of this convention, that

¹ J. B. Bishop, *Presidential Nominations*, p. 80.

² *Proceedings of the Republican National Convention*, p. 410, referred to later as *Proceedings*.

every member of it is bound in honor to support its nominee whoever that nominee may be, and that no man should hold a seat here who is not ready to so agree." This was carried on a roll call, only three voting no, all from West Virginia. If Conkling had stopped there all would have been well, but, yielding to the impulse to annihilate any opposition, he turned furiously on the three eccentric voters from West Virginia and offered the following resolution: "That the delegates who on this roll-call have voted 'no' have forfeited their rights in this convention."¹

Against this resolution of expulsion the three members spoke, and for it two men addressed the convention, Brandedge of Connecticut and a delegate from Tennessee. The ground taken by the West Virginians was peculiar but perfectly comprehensible to a Southerner. At this point Garfield rose and made a brief but exceedingly effective speech after his best manner of Congressional debating, involving persuasion and the appeal to fairness and individual integrity as its main elements.² "I fear," he said, "this Convention is about to commit a great error, and before they act I beg leave to state the case. The three delegates said they felt it was unwise to pass such a resolution. Are they to be disfranchised because they thought it was not the time to pass the resolution for which we voted? That is the whole question. We come here as Republicans and as one of our rights we can vote on every resolution 'Aye' or 'No.' We are responsible for those votes to our constituents and to them alone. There never was a convention, there never can be a convention of which I am one delegate, equal in rights to every other delegate, that shall bind my vote against my will on every question whatever. . . . I say they acted in their right and not by my vote shall they be deprived of their seats or their freedom." He closed with a strong tribute to A. W. Campbell, chairman of the West Virginia delegation, for his long antislavery record.

The effect of this speech was immediate. A California delegate, a Blaine supporter, at once rose and moved to lay the

¹ *Proceedings*, p. 412.

² *Ibid.*, p. 416.

resolution on the table. Conkling at first asked that the roll be called, since it was a test question, but promptly changed his mind and after an effort to compel the chairman to state that the West Virginians had announced their intention to vote for the nominee—an effort which Hoar brushed aside—he himself withdrew the motion, confessing defeat.

To Conkling, Garfield's action in this case was merely a piece of self-advertisement. His biographer states¹ that he immediately "wrote on a newspaper 'I congratulate you on being the dark horse' and when General Garfield resumed his seat he turned to delegate J. D. Lawson of the City of New York, and tearing off the written piece of paper said 'Please hand this to Mr. Garfield.'" To him the whole thing was a game, in which Garfield had scored a trick for himself.

Of this encounter the *Cleveland Herald* said, "General Garfield made a speech that for firmness, moderation and fairness captured the whole convention." Of Conkling's sarcasm it said: "It is a wonderful cutting blade that this handsome senator can use when he feels disposed. You admire its brilliancy and edge and yet our sympathies and respect are generally with its victims. You feel all the time that Conkling slashed not so much because he had a worthy purpose in view as to show himself and hurt his opponent. General Garfield won a fine reception today. He spoke with force and dignity and his fairness was conceded by all. There is hope in all quarters that he will come actively to the front before the convention ends and there is no doubt but that hope will be gratified."

The report of the Committee on Credentials produced a long contest, lasting all the rest of June 4 and the first part of June 5. In a great many of the cases the same principle was involved as in the unit rule, namely, the right of a state convention to determine the membership of a state delegation to the national convention over the contrary will of a district convention or primary. The most marked case of this was in Illinois where the state convention, led by Logan, had "run a steam roller" over certain districts. The upshot of much

¹ A. R. Conkling, *Life of Roscoe Conkling*, p. 592.

debate, sharp parliamentary practice, accompanied with a tremendous gallery demonstration for Grant and Conkling, was the triumph of the anti-Grant forces by a rather close vote, 387 to 353, resulting in the seating of eighteen Blaine and Washburne delegates. This took place amid a simultaneous uproar by both Grant and Blaine supporters—"10,000 wild people," the Cleveland *Herald* called them. The other contests, which were less important, were settled as a rule by larger majorities in favor of the anti-Grant claimants. This made it so evident that the unit rule would not be imposed on the convention that Garfield's report, when it was taken up, after the conclusion of the voting on the credentials contest, occupied a relatively short time.

Garfield took no part in this debate. In presenting his own report and advocating it he seems, from the printed official account, to have treated the New York minority of the committee with every consideration. The minority resolution was defeated 479 to 276, not receiving even the full Grant vote, and the original minority report was then rejected and the majority report adopted without a roll call. That clinched matters. Grant could win only by an actual majority, if at all.

In the evening session of June 5 the candidates were presented, Blaine, Grant and Sherman being the recognized leaders, with Windom of Minnesota, Edmunds of Vermont and Washburne of Illinois as "favorite sons." Conkling's speech nominating Grant has become famous in the annals of national conventions.¹ Aside from its vigorous laudation of Grant, "Never defeated—in peace or in war—his name is the most illustrious borne by living man," it was a powerful argument for him as the only candidate who could certainly be elected. "Believing that he, more than any other man, can carry New York against any opponent and can carry not only the North but several states of the South, New York is for Ulysses S. Grant."

In this speech, however, Conkling could not forego the chance of casting slurs upon the other candidates, especially

¹ *Proceedings*, pp. 550-553.

Blaine. "He went out of his way," says Bishop,¹ "to give mortal offence to the Blaine forces and to all other elements of the convention that were opposing Grant." He said, for instance:² "With him as our leader, we shall have no defensive campaign. We shall have nothing to explain away. We shall have no apologies to make,"—a clear allusion to the Mulligan letters. And again: "Without patronage, without emissaries, without committees, without telegraph wires running from his house to this convention, . . . without electioneering contrivances, Grant's name is on his country's lips"—a further sneer at Blaine. The uproar which followed this speech surpassed anything ever known before in a convention. Yet, in spite of the storms of applause and shouting which it evoked, it damaged rather than aided Grant's cause. "There is of Conkling's speech but one sentiment."³ As an oration, his effort is pronounced superb; as a nominating speech it was not fortunate. Said a member of the Illinois delegation 'His sarcasm is all right in some places but out of place here.' "

It was now Garfield's turn to present the name of Sherman. It was no easy task. Sherman was a man without qualities that would make him attractive to the general public, and to compete with the soaring rhetoric that might be poured forth about Blaine or Grant was out of the question. The best that could be done was to dwell on Sherman's sturdy Republicanism, long service and recent success in carrying through the resumption of specie payment. Garfield himself undoubtedly favored Blaine's nomination, as the quotations in the chapter already given make clear, and undertook the management of the Sherman campaign only as his duty to the state party. At the same time he was firmly determined to execute that duty to the full. Consequently his speech proved to be a remarkably successful performance, notably its introduction, wherein he skillfully managed a transition from the excitement of the Grant demonstration to the calm consideration of Sherman's civic virtues.

¹ *Presidential Nominations*, p. 82.

² *Proceedings*, p. 551.

³ *Cleveland Herald*, June 6.

"I have witnessed the extraordinary scenes of this Convention with deep solicitude," he began. "As I sat in my seat and witnessed this demonstration, this assemblage seemed to me a human ocean in tempest . . . but I remember that it is not the billows but the calm level of the sea from which all heights and depths are measured. . . . Gentlemen of the Convention, your present temper may not mark the healthful pulse of our people. When your enthusiasm has passed, we shall find below the storm and passion that calm level of public opinion from which the thoughts of a mighty people are to be measured. Not here, in this brilliant circle, where 15,000 men and women are gathered is the destiny of the Republic to be decreed, but by four million of Republican firesides."¹

Garfield then went on to point out the need for a harmonious party. "How shall we accomplish this great work? We cannot do it, my friends, by assailing our Republican brethren. . . . In order to win victory now we need the vote of every Republican—of every Grant Republican and every anti-Grant Republican in America,—of every Blaine man and every anti-Blaine man." Such a candidate, who could unite all factions, was Sherman, whose long career he then sketched from the very foundation of the Republican party. His peroration was skillful. "For twenty-five years he has trodden the perilous heights of public duty and against all the shafts of malice has borne his breast unharmed. He has stood in the blaze of 'that fierce light that beats against the throne' but its fiercest ray has found no flaw in his armor, no stain upon his shield. I do not present him as a better Republican or a better man than thousands of others that we honor; but I present him for your deliberate and favorable judgment. (Long-continued applause.)"

Hoar, who presided, speaking of Garfield's speech, calls it "one of the greatest oratorical triumphs I ever witnessed."² It is an interesting fact that this speech was to a considerable degree an extempore one. Garfield wrote to his wife (June 2): "I have arisen this morning to tell you the peril

¹ *Proceedings*, pp. 554-557.

² *Autobiography*, Vol. II, p. 393.

I am in. I have not made the first step in preparation for my speech nominating Sherman, and I see no chance I can get to prepare it. It was a frightful mistake that I did not write it before I came. It now seems inevitable that I shall fall far below what I ought to do."

As is likely to be the case with an extempore speech under such circumstances, material already used made a reappearance. The famous introduction, in which Garfield after likening the excitement of the convention to a storm at sea, pointed out that the future decisions of the country would not be based on the passions of the moment but on the "calm level of public opinion," was a condensed version of the introduction to his reply to Stephens in 1873.

But while he spoke, hundreds of the delegates who sat there felt that they were listening to the possible nominee of the convention, rather than the advocate of a candidate. One of them actually interjected this idea into the speech itself, for when Garfield, after his exordium, asked, "and now, Gentlemen of the Convention, what do we want?" a voice shouted, "We want Garfield,"¹ and the laughter which followed forced him to retort in the words of Brutus, "Bear with me a moment. Hear me for my cause and for a moment be silent that you may hear." Of course many supposed that Garfield under guise of supporting Sherman was really pushing himself forward. There was no escape for him. He was caught in the dilemma. The more earnestly he tried to perform his duties to his state's candidate, the more surely would he be suspected of trying to supplant him.

The next morning Garfield sent to his wife what proved to be his last word for many days from the scene of conflict. Since he was too driven to write in his journal, this letter assumes importance as the last direct evidence of his state of mind at this critical moment in his career. He had, further, before him a letter from Mentor in which his wife heartily agreed with his earlier remark that his nomination would be undesirable because of the bitterness engendered. "I begin," she said (June 4), "to be half afraid that the convention

¹ *Proceedings*, p. 555.

will give you the nomination, and the place would be most unenviable with so many disappointed candidates. I don't want you to have the nomination merely because no one else can get it. I want you to have it when the whole country calls for you as the State of Ohio did last fall. My ambition does not stop short of that."

To this he replied (June 6): "The mental and physical strain of the week ending with the two days and nights of Chickamauga were hardly less [more ?] than that which Chicago has brought upon the men of this convention. You have doubtless followed the course of events and will see, before this reaches you, the steps of progress. For any man to have kept his head upon his shoulders is no small matter. If I have succeeded better than most, it is largely due to the fact that I see always before me your calm face, counselling wisdom, prudence and truth. On the work of last night, as on all since I came, I hope I have your approval. There have been times in the convention, when it seemed that it could not be in America, but in the Sections of Paris in the ecstasy of the Revolution. Again it was all Ephesus, where the claquers of the silver smiths cast dust in the air and by the space of two hours cried 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' I shall never be able to give you any adequate idea of the scene which preceded the vote on the Illinois contested seats, and the similar scenes of last night when the different candidates were put in nomination. I will not try now. I persevered to the end in not writing a speech; I marshalled a few ideas in their ranks for any thing that might come from the suggestions of the hour and in this I was fortunate, for Conkling's extraordinary speech gave me the idea of carrying the mind of the convention in a different direction. In that I think I had some success. At least, it was success of a better kind than his. Of all these things we will talk soon. I think the good opinion of the Convention toward me is not lessening. It is needless to tell you how anxious I am to be with you and I shall be happy if I am let alone by this convention. Your sentence on that subject is a very crystal of wisdom and pride."

Garfield wrote this letter on a Sunday, which, like the

preceding one, was filled with feverish negotiations and efforts to organize winning combinations. The newspapers of that day and the next give some idea of the tension and of the extent to which the Garfield movement was growing. The Cleveland *Leader* correspondent reported on this point fully, under the headline "Growing Belief that Garfield is a Solid Probability." "The General himself says positively that he cannot honorably be a candidate as long as he is a delegate instructed to support Mr. Sherman and therefore feels constrained to decline. This makes his friends more strenuous than ever that he should be announced as a candidate. Should his name be brought forward, nearly the whole Ohio delegation will vote for him." Commenting on the charge that the Garfield talk was a Blaine trick to disrupt the Ohio delegation, the correspondent wrote: "I have seen no indication of this and from what has been told me in all quarters I must conclude that all that has been said in favor of General Garfield—and it has been a great deal—is due to an honest, genuine admiration for the man. I have conversed with Garfield and talked with men who have met him often during the progress of the convention and I have yet to hear of a single expression or word from the lips of the great Ohioan that indicates anything but the intention, fixed and imperishable, to do all that he is able for John Sherman until the secretary was either nominated or proved beyond doubt to be an unsuccessful candidate."

H. C. Lodge, then a Massachusetts delegate, said later, in a speech: "I was one of those deputed to call upon General Garfield on Sunday night to obtain his consent to use his name when it appeared that out of the dust of the battle might come a nominee who would not unite the interests of the party. General Garfield's reply was: 'No; my name must not be used. I am going to nominate John Sherman; I am going to vote for him and I will be loyal to him. My name must not be used.'"

On Monday the balloting began, and the delegates voted as follows: Grant, 304; Blaine, 284; Sherman, 93; Edmunds, 34; Washburne, 30; Windom, 10. It was at once seen that the defeat of the unit rule had prevented the nomina-

tion of Grant on the first ballot, for with it in full operation Grant probably would have received at least sixty-three votes from New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois, which would have given him 367 or within nine of a majority. In such a situation it would have been impossible to prevent his nomination on the next ballot; perhaps on this very one. The defeat of the unit rule had prevented such an outcome. In announcing this and subsequent ballots for his state, Conkling employed "a studied insolence toward the anti-Grant delegates," whose votes, cast in defiance of his will, he was compelled to present.

Under the rule, when a ballot showed no majority a second ballot had to be taken at once, with no debate; when that produced no majority, a third; and so on. Discussion arose only when, from time to time, some delegation had to be polled openly in order to satisfy a protest regarding the announcement of a vote. After the first two roll calls it became clear that there would be no prompt decision and the conviction became constantly firmer as the day went on that only some sort of "stampede" or bargain could solve the deadlock. The Grant vote became 305 on the second ballot, and stayed there most of the time until the twenty-eighth terminated the day's proceedings. The highest it went was 309, the lowest 302. The Blaine vote was almost equally stable, staying between 280 and 285 most of the time. Sherman picked up a few scattering votes and increased his figure from 93 at the outset to 97 and then declined. The "favorite sons" drew about the same number on the twenty-eighth as on the first. This outcome indicated several things; that Sherman could not draw Blaine votes and that none of the "favorite sons" showed the slightest capacity to arouse enthusiasm and draw enough supporters to begin a "break." All through the day two Pennsylvania delegates undertook to keep Garfield's name before the convention, one or the other of them and sometimes both voting for him on every ballot, although at times one of them—possibly some other Pennsylvanian—cast a vote for Harrison of Indiana, eight years later to be nominated. On the sixth ballot an Alabama delegate began to vote for Garfield, changing from Grant,

but presently returned. From the fourteenth ballot to the nineteenth Garfield received no votes from his Pennsylvania friends, who changed to Washburne, apparently; but on the nineteenth they resumed their little game. It was supposed to have an effect on the other delegates, by constantly reminding them that Garfield was the man to solve the situation.¹

On June 8 the first ballot showed that an effort was being made to concentrate on Sherman, for twenty-five more votes were cast for him than ever before, drawn from Edmunds, Windom and Blaine. Garfield still had the two Pennsylvanians. On the next ballot the Sherman vote rose to 120. It looked a little as though progress were possible in that direction, but on the thirty-first ballot the Sherman vote dropped to 118, on the thirty-second to 117 and on the thirty-third to 110. No real impression was made on the Blaine supporters, without whom no nomination was possible. Evidently affairs had reached a point where some new step would have to be attempted.

This was the deadlock which had been predicted ever since spring, and the situation for which Garfield's friends in Ohio and all over the country had been waiting. The tension in the convention was excessive. Under the surface all sorts of plans, wholly unsanctioned by him, were ready to be tried out when the moment came. Concerning these the amount of traditional information—much of it highly contradictory—is enormous. All the contemporary evidence, the references in newspapers warmly in favor of Garfield and anxious to have him nominated, report him as stubbornly refusing to sanction any dark horse plans.

The Chicago *Inter Ocean* correspondent reported that certain Blaine leaders proposed a combination with the Sherman supporters on Garfield and approached Garfield directly. "General Garfield said that if his name was proposed he should himself rise in the convention and withdraw it. He insisted that the Ohio men should stand by Sherman and that no negotiations for his candidacy should be entered

¹ C. W. Thompson, *New Voter*, pp. 261-264.

upon by the Sherman men and his wish was respected. No further action was taken by the Sherman men in the negotiations that followed." Grosvenor of Ohio told a *Chicago Daily News* reporter of his effort to induce Garfield to let his name be presented as a compromise candidate. "Garfield said he would rise in his place and denounce any such movement if his name should become prominent in the balloting. Grosvenor asked him if he had any ambition to be President. General Garfield replied that he had, but added that his time had not yet come; ten years later he would be glad to receive the nomination but not at that time. Grosvenor remarked that to wait for ten years, trusting to the additional claims upon the favor of the people which he might secure, would be very risky. He added that General Garfield could be nominated on the coming day if he should not repel the efforts which his friends had decided to make in his behalf. General Garfield replied with emphasis that he would resist any such effort and openly denounce it on the floor of the convention, whereupon Grosvenor departed, sorely disappointed because he believed that General Garfield would throw away an opportunity which might never come to him again."

The men in the convention who were bent upon using Garfield to defeat Grant were headed by two determined groups, the state delegations of Wisconsin and of Indiana. Finding that nothing could be gained from the Ohio delegation, which was held firm by Garfield, they decided to attempt the break on their own responsibility. On the thirty-fourth ballot, in which, by the way, the Grant vote ran up to 312, the highest point reached, the Wisconsin delegation, occupying a strategic position at the end of the list arose, and without warning threw sixteen of its twenty votes for Garfield. Instantly Garfield sprang to his feet saying, "Mr. President." The presiding officer, G. F. Hoar, recognizing him, asked, "For what purpose does the gentleman rise?" Garfield: "I rise to a point of order." The president: "The gentlemen from Ohio rises to a question of order." Mr. Garfield: "I challenge the correctness of the announcement. The announcement contains votes for me. No man has a right

without the consent of the person voted for, to announce that person's name and vote for him in this convention. Such consent I have not given." The president (interrupting): "The gentleman from Ohio is not stating a question of order. He will resume his seat. No person having received a majority of the votes cast, another ballot will be taken."¹

In his autobiography Hoar described this episode:² "I said on the first day of the convention that in my opinion if the delegates could be shut up by themselves and not permitted to leave the room until they agreed, the man on whom they would agree would be General Garfield. This desire became more and more apparent as the convention went on." When Garfield rose to protest Hoar hastened to override him as above described. "I was terribly afraid," he added, "that he would say something that would make his nomination impossible." Garfield himself is quoted³ as saying of this encounter afterwards, "If Senator Hoar had permitted I would have forbidden anybody to vote for me. But he took me off my feet before I had said what I intended."

The next ballot would determine whether this move of the Wisconsin delegation from Blaine to Garfield was to give the signal for the long-expected "stampede." The result, when announced, showed that Grant had gained one more and stood at 313, but that twenty-seven Indiana delegates led by Harrison and scattering delegates elsewhere had joined the sixteen Wisconsin men and the faithful Pennsylvanians, so that Garfield now had fifty votes. It was probably at this juncture that Sherman sent a dispatch to Dennison: "Whenever the vote of Ohio will be likely to secure the nomination of Garfield, I appeal to every delegate to vote for him. Let Ohio be solid." He says he sent this "as soon as I heard of the movement to nominate Garfield," which would point to the interval after this ballot.⁴

On the thirty-sixth ballot the stampede broke loose as delegation after delegation arose and cast most of the former

¹ *Proceedings*, p. 622.

² *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 395.

³ Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 126.

⁴ *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 775.

Blaine, Sherman and "favorite son" votes for Garfield. "The whole audience were on their feet," wrote the Cleveland *Herald* reporter, "cheering and waving banners, hats and handkerchiefs. The Grant men alone exhibit no enthusiasm. The convention is wild with excitement." Later he wrote: "The thirty-sixth ballot was taken amidst the wildest excitement. Garfield was seen remonstrating with delegates when the whole audience rose and shouted, 'Garfield, Garfield.' The delegates were all standing and talking; it was nearly half an hour before order could be restored."

The Chicago *Inter Ocean* reporter described it: "Order was entirely ignored. Garfield sat in his seat, vainly endeavoring to appear unconcerned, with a color-changing face, restless motion and other indications of restrained feeling and strong emotion. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs and fans, and men hurraed with vigor and long-continued screaming." During the stampede the *Inter Ocean* correspondent made his way into the Ohio delegation and found Garfield unshaken in his determination. He "insisted that the vote of the delegation should be cast for Sherman as it had been done. 'You must not desert Sherman,' he said. 'If this convention nominates me it should be done without a vote from Ohio.'" At this moment Sherman's telegram arrived and was read. "That settles it," exclaimed Butterworth. "Cast my vote for Sherman," said Garfield, but Ohio was announced and Butterworth, springing upon a chair, announced forty-three votes for Garfield. The man whose name was upon every lip and for whom ten thousand people were shouting sat in his seat, pale but the very embodiment of composure. Turning to the reporter Garfield said: "I wish you would say that this is no act of mine. I wish you would say that I have done everything and omitted nothing to secure Secretary Sherman's nomination. I want it plainly understood that I have not sought the nomination and have protested against the use of my name." "Garfield," said the reporter, "was the only sober man in the whole convention."

This last sentence was not true. The Grant supporters remained perfectly sober and refused to take any part in the stampede. Chairman after chairman rose and gave the Grant

vote unbroken, so that the final figures stood: Garfield, 399; Grant, 306; Blaine, 42; Washburne, 5; Sherman, 3. The "Stalwarts" went to defeat with unbroken ranks.

All eyes were turned, of course, on Garfield, who sat motionless in his seat during the uproar. Some saw in his appearance the aspect of a man overwhelmed by a stunning surprise. "As I look back now," wrote Cullom,¹ "I do not think I ever saw a man apparently so affected as General Garfield was when it was announced that he was the nominee of the Republican party for the presidency. Seemingly he almost utterly collapsed. He sank into his seat, overcome." On the other hand, the New York *Tribune* correspondent marveled at his self-control. "While the building was resounding with loud cheers for Garfield, there was a cluster of excited delegates about the General himself, who sat quiet and cool in his ordinary place at the end of one of the rows of seats in the Ohio delegation. He wore the white badge of an Ohio delegate on his coat, and held his massive head steadily immovable. But for an appearance of extra resoluteness on his face, as that of a man who was repressing internal excitement, he might have been supposed to have as little interest in the proceedings as any other delegate on the floor of the convention. He was, in fact, going through one of the most extraordinary experiences ever given to an American citizen."²

One more formality remained. When the vote was finally announced the president said: "James A. Garfield of Ohio is nominated for President of the United States. Shall the nomination be made unanimous?" Then Conkling rose to the occasion in fairly good style, making the necessary motion, although with no compliment to the candidate, and he was followed by Hale, the Blaine leader; Logan; Beaver of Pennsylvania; Foster of Ohio,—who read Sherman's telegram already quoted,—and one or two others. Practically every speech dwelt upon the fortunate outcome of the convention and the chance for a united party. Conkling con-

¹ *Fifty Years of Public Service*, p. 124.

² Royal Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 25.

gratulated the party on "the good nature and the well tempered rivalry" and trusted that "the zeal, the fervor and the unanimity might be transplanted to the field of the final conflict." Hale, the Blaine manager, remarked: "We have not got the man we came up here hoping to nominate but we have got a man in whom we have the greatest and most profound confidence."¹

These speeches show that, for the moment, the convention and the leaders of the different sections and groups felt that the best possible escape had been found from the dilemma into which they had walked. In the evening session an effort was made, in the nomination for Vice-President, to secure recognition of the "immortal 306" and of the most aggressive element in that body, by nominating a New York man. The result of the negotiations was that Chester A. Arthur was nominated on the first ballot by 468 votes, Washburne running second with 193, contributed by certain persistent pro-Blaine and anti-Grant groups who would not under any circumstances vote for one of the New York machine men. Whether Garfield himself had any share in this arrangement is a matter of conjecture. Contradictory stories and traditions abound.

D. S. Alexander, in his *History of the State of New York*,² notes that contemporary newspapers assumed that Arthur's nomination was demanded by Conkling as a vindication, but that Conkling's biographer denies that he made any suggestion at all. His version is based upon reminiscences of S. L. Woodford, a New York leader of the Grant wing, given in 1909, who stated that Garfield, through Denison of Ohio, "sent word that he desired Morton nominated for second place." Morton asked Conkling, who declined to advise him, but on Boutwell's recommendation he refused the offer. The "Stalwarts" then, acting without Conkling, recommended Arthur, who agreed at once. The "Stalwart" chief, asserting that Garfield could not possibly be elected, bitterly condemned Arthur's action, but could not move him, so the arrangement was carried out. The authorities cited by

¹ *Proceedings*, p. 278.

² Vol. III, pp. 442-446.

Alexander, except Woodford, are letters from two other participants, one of them Morton himself. Accepting this with all the reserve necessary in dealing with reminiscences twenty-eight years after the event, it indicates that Garfield's instincts led him instantly to begin the task of propitiating the faction which he had aided in defeating.

The formal notification of the candidates, by a committee of one from each state delegation at eleven in the evening of June 8, completed the affair. In replying to the address of Hoar, the presiding officer, Garfield spoke briefly, his words showing how far from elated he was over the honor that had come to him and how he regarded it as essentially a means for bringing party harmony. In the case of any man who had been an avowed candidate such language might have been deemed conventional modesty. In Garfield's case it was the deepest conviction of his heart, repeating to the world what he had been writing in confidence to his closest friends, and noting in his private diary. "I assure you," he said,¹ "that the information you have officially given me brings the sense of a very grave responsibility, and especially so in view of the fact that I was a member of your body, a fact that could not have existed with propriety had I the slightest expectation that my name would be connected with the nomination for the office. I have felt with you great solicitude concerning the situation of our party during the struggle; but believing that you are correct in assuring me that substantial unity has been reached in the conclusion it gave me a gratification far greater than any personal pleasure your announcement can bring. I accept the trust committed to my hands." On that same evening he sent the following telegram to Mentor. "Dear Wife: If the result meets your approval I shall be content. Love to all the household."

Judgments upon the outcome of this, the most dramatic of all the cases of a "stampede" in a convention to a "dark horse," have been innumerable. So far as Garfield himself is concerned, they rest mainly upon the conjectures which

¹ *Proceedings*, p. 647.

writers have formed of his probable motives, and suppositions as to his sayings and doings outside the convention. To some the whole thing has appeared as a carefully prearranged and skillfully managed attempt on his part to capture the nomination. A. K. McClure, for instance, who saw the proceedings, says "Garfield knew that a third candidate must eventually be accepted and he illy concealed his efforts to advance himself, while ostensibly struggling for Sherman."¹

In view of the contents of his diary and letters during the period culminating in the balloting, this theory can scarcely be considered tenable. He certainly did nothing knowingly to foster his own chances, if his most confidential utterances are not to be dismissed as elaborate hypocrisy. And the strongest argument against this theory is found in Garfield's whole career and deep-founded habits of mind regarding methods of political advancement.

Others writers assert that, since Garfield knew of the efforts of a certain group to boom him as a "dark horse," he might be considered responsible for the persistence of this *sub rosa* agitation, at least to the degree that he did not positively stop it by saying that in no circumstances would he accept a nomination. Just how much he knew cannot be stated, but the phrases in his letters to his wife show clearly that he was conscious of a widespread belief that he would probably prove the "dark horse" if one was needed.

Rhodes, who applies to public men standards of conduct which certainly have never been customary in American politics, apparently thinks that Garfield should have refused the nomination regardless of circumstances. "Nobody can doubt," he says,² "that Garfield, with his magnificent presence and stentorian voice, could have commanded the attention of the Convention and by declining to be a candidate under any circumstances have turned the tide which was setting in his favor. But his characteristic vacillation prevented him from taking the most glorious action of his life,

¹ *Our Presidents*, p. 271.

² *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 126.

that of absolutely refusing consent to his nomination. Apparently the thought of his trust was overpowered by the conviction that the prize was his without the usual hard preliminary work." Similarly Rhodes thinks that Hayes, in 1876, should have refused the presidency because of the unsavory character of the Returning Board of Louisiana.¹ All one can say is that such renunciations are not made in American politics. The reasoning which calls for them seems strained.

This is to be noted, that the Republican Convention had met to nominate a candidate, that through thirty-four ballots it had been conclusively shown that Sherman was completely unable to draw votes from either the Blaine or the Grant columns and that if his support disintegrated it was certainly to be distributed between the two leading candidates. Furthermore, the concentration of votes upon a compromise candidate was a perfectly well-known method of terminating a deadlock, with striking historical examples at hand in the conventions of each party. If there was such a thing as duty to the party as a whole overriding duty to a single candidate, the duty of accepting a nomination in order to harmonize bitterly antagonistic factions, it certainly existed in this case. Most politicians would regard Garfield's acceptance of the nomination as perfectly proper.

In his autobiography² Hoar says on this point: "Mr. Sherman's nomination was seen by everybody to have been absolutely impossible long before the final result. I was in constant consultation with leaders of the different delegations who were trying to unite their forces. There was never any considerable number of these persons who thought the nomination of Mr. Sherman practicable, notwithstanding the high personal respect in which they held him. . . . I have not the slightest respect for the suggestion that General Garfield in the least violated his honor or good faith in consenting to accept the nomination after he had been elected a delegate in the interest of Mr. Sherman. The office

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VII, p. 236.

² Vol. I, p. 396.

of the President is not personal. There can be no such things as a personal claim upon it or a personal obligation in regard to it. Mr. Sherman's nomination was an impossibility from the beginning. That the majority of the convention united upon Garfield was due to the fact that he had no enemies or antagonists in the convention, or among the people, and, to some degree also, to the admiration felt by his fellow-delegates for the tact, sense and good nature which he showed in its discussions—qualities which were in marked contrast with those of his very able and powerful antagonist."

As for the insinuation in the last sentence of Rhodes's account, that "Garfield must have felt that his hold on the delegates was powerful and that if neither Grant, Blaine nor Sherman could secure the prize, he might win it for himself," it is to be said that all such guesses as to what Garfield "must have thought" are rash when made in ignorance of the contents of Garfield's letters and journal. As has been abundantly shown, Garfield was not anxious to get the nomination, rather dreaded it than welcomed it and accepted it chiefly because he felt it his duty to try to solve the party problem created by the violent factional split.

It is also to be noted that if Garfield took the chance of a nomination away from Sherman, his official candidate, he committed a still greater breach of personal friendship in taking the nomination away from Blaine, with whom he was on terms of far greater cordiality than with Sherman and with whose nomination he would have been heartily pleased. The fact is, neither of these men took any offense at him over the outcome of the convention. Sherman was, of course, promptly informed that Garfield had plotted to supplant him, but in a letter of June 30, to Governor Foster of Ohio, he rejected these insinuations. "I will do him [Garfield] the justice to say that I have seen no evidence that he has contributed to this result except by his good conduct in the presence of the Convention. . . . If I believed that he had used the position I gave him to supplant me, I would consider it dishonorable, and would not support him; but, while such statements have been made to me, I feel bound to say that I have never seen nor heard from credible sources any

ground for such an imputation and, therefore, he shall have my earnest and hearty support.”¹

Garfield's nomination can thus be regarded as in a sense an accident; for he was not a candidate and was not a national leader to the degree that Blaine or Grant or Sherman was. But he was emphatically presidential timber, as recognized in the newspapers prior to the convention; and his record in Congress since 1876 had made him a public figure, second only to those who officially were candidates. Unless he had made the record of 1876 to 1880 as a party orator and leader, he would not have been the general choice of all anti-Grant elements on that thirty-sixth ballot.

The immediate response of the public and the press to the nomination was striking in its revelation of a general kindly personal feeling toward Garfield. Scarcely worth quoting, their utterances embodied the first enthusiasm which a presidential nomination usually evokes and the polite recognition from Democratic opponents which was the conventional civility, before the harsher judgments rendered necessary by the campaign should put in an appearance. Upon Garfield himself descended an avalanche of letters from political acquaintances, from friends, from political opponents, from perfectly unknown people.

Probably no man in the United States was more thoroughly satisfied with the outcome of the convention than Hayes. “Garfield's nomination at Chicago,” he wrote, “was the best that was possible. It is altogether good. He is the ideal candidate because he is the ideal self-made man.”² As Hayes's biographer remarks: “General Garfield had been one of the statesmen that visited Louisiana during the count of votes by the Returning Board and had served on the Electoral Commission. During Mr. Hayes' entire term he had been the Republican leader in the House of Representatives and the constant and most effective advocate and defender of the Administration's policies. Even the nomination of Mr. Sherman could hardly have been interpreted as a

¹ *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 778.

² Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 239.

more emphatic expression by the party of commendation of Mr. Hayes' conduct of the Government."

Garfield did not go directly to his home from Chicago, but fulfilled a long-standing promise by traveling to attend Commencement at Hiram on June 10 and 11, seeing his old haunts, his old friends and relatives and addressing the school and the alumni with a dozen newspaper correspondents and political friends in his company. Then on June 11, leaving Hiram in the afternoon, he drove northward, behind a pair of Dr. Robison's horses, across Geauga County, stopping to see old friends in his former Congressional district. Finally, after two weeks' absence, he returned to his home, having undergone experiences such as cast into the shade anything that had happened in his whole life hitherto.

Thus Garfield, thanks to his personal gifts, to his relatively neutral position as between fixed and antagonistic groups, to his bearing in the convention and to his own sense of party loyalty overriding his lack of desire for a nomination, became the presidential candidate of the Republican party. But in so doing he had inflicted a severe defeat upon a set of men—the Grant leaders—among the most determined and politically ruthless in the United States and had personally contributed to the overthrow of one of them already known to be the implacable enemy of anyone who had successfully crossed his path—namely, Senator Conkling of New York. That Conkling had offered the motion to make the nomination unanimous did not signify any real cordiality; that was merely his perfunctory duty, a public tribute to the necessary unity of the party in the coming election. In private the outcome filled him with disgust, as numerous anecdotes indicate. "On the day the delegates turned their backs on Chicago," wrote a reporter,¹ "and their faces toward home, Garfield was a beaten man—in the opinion of the delegates. There were elements that were resentful and in an ugly temper."

It mattered not what the Democrats might do in the campaign; with them the contest would be waged according to

¹ W. C. Hudson, *Random Recollections*, p. 104.

well-known and open methods. For Garfield the real problem had only been presented, the problem of his future relationship to the one absolutely unreconciled individual who journeyed homeward after the convention, the "Boss of New York."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1880

THE brief days of resting at Mentor and of readjustment to the astounding new situation could not last long. It was necessary for the candidate to begin to take his share in the campaign by coming to a good understanding with the official and working elements of the party and to map out for himself a course of action consistent with his beliefs and principles. At the same time it was necessary for him to take into consideration the means by which he could conciliate the divergent factions, still sore and angry after the contest at Chicago.

So far as the contest with the Democrats was concerned, the Republican party was much better off than it had been in 1876. First and foremost, the financial and business depression had ended and the country was enjoying a prosperity unknown since the panic of 1873. This, of course, removed the principal grievance of the opposition party. In the next place, Hayes's administration had been such as to offer no point vulnerable to attack; it had been clean, efficient, respectable; the party could enter the campaign with nothing to call for explanations or apologies. Finally, the recent performances of the Democrats in Congress in dashing themselves fruitlessly against Hayes's veto in a struggle to wipe out the election laws and hamper the use of the army, had resulted solely in damaging their prestige and strengthening Republican feeling. Garfield undoubtedly felt that with ordinary energy in campaigning it would be possible to regain all the ground lost in the North in 1876 and 1877 and thus carry the electoral college. When, on June 23, the Democratic National Convention nominated General W. S. Hancock, as if to meet one Civil War commander by a more distinguished fighter, and adopted a platform whose sole vigorous paragraph dealt with the elec-

toral count of 1877, it was generally felt that the Republicans were left in an advantageous position, provided only they were sufficiently united to profit from it. That was the one doubtful point.

The outcome of the convention had been to defeat a number of the most powerful and combative leaders in the party and to leave them intensely bitter toward Blaine and all his supporters. In the case of Conkling, this bitterness was concentrated upon that group of delegates in New York, who, defying the instructions of the state convention, had voted for Blaine, Sherman or Garfield, thus aiding materially in the defeat of Grant. In Illinois a somewhat similar situation existed, with Logan as the defeated "boss," while in Pennsylvania the party was squarely split between Cameron and a group of antagonistic "Independents." It was entirely possible that unless something were done to harmonize the party in these states, in other words, to conciliate the Grant men, the resulting "apathy" might cause a loss of electoral votes which would certainly be fatal. New York alone controlled the outcome of the election.

It was the duty of Garfield to bring about this harmony, but under the difficulty that any step on his part toward conciliating Conkling, Cameron and Logan would be viewed with extreme jealousy by all the "Blaine men," who utterly detested the Grant group, and with harsh suspicion by all the "reform" or "independent" elements, who saw no reason for allowing a desire to win the election bring about concessions to the leaders of "machine politics."

Garfield confronted this tangled situation with a kind of patient and conciliatory tenacity. He was willing to consult with any good Republican and to listen to his advice; he had no plans to impose on others, no pride of leadership, no vanity, no desire to be masterful. He was ready to do the best thing for the party. But there was one thing he would not do; he would not make any bargains, any pledges to individuals or groups, any "understandings" that would impair his freedom of decision. He would not purchase support. On that he stood with immovable obstinacy. It was a

fundamental principle, maintained since he first entered political life.

It was from this fixed habit of his that most of his further difficulties arose, since the men with whom he was compelled to deal approached all political questions from the diametrically opposite direction. To the seasoned politicians who ran the Republican party machine the only rational method of arranging matters was on the basis of definite concrete agreements. To the baser sort it was practically bargain and sale, to those higher up it assumed the form of "pledges" and "understandings" and "promises," but to one and all it was contractual. If Garfield had been ready to arrange slates, promise appointments, guarantee specific recognition and, in general, coördinate all elements of the party on the basis of satisfying claims in the order of their importance, he would have avoided nearly every one of the troubles which burst upon him and surged around him for the year following his nomination and which ultimately led indirectly to the assassin's bullet.

"Returning to Mentor," wrote Rockwell,¹ "he began the work of the campaign, the unwritten history of which will show a thoroughness, a mastery of detail, a wise management, and, above all, a supremacy of direction and command, that are known to few." The truth of this assertion will now be substantiated. The one thing that Garfield's friends feared from the moment he was nominated was that, owing to his general geniality, he did not possess an adequate power of seeing through the traps and manœuvres of self-seeking individuals. Such men as John Hay and Whitelaw Reid, warm admirers and supporters, hastened to impress upon him the overwhelming necessity for caution and reticence in speech. Hay wrote to Reid right after the nomination,² "As you will see Garfield before I do, I hope you will inoculate him with the gall which I fear he lacks." He certainly did lack the "gall" which drips freely from the letters of Hay, printed and unprinted. Reid hastened to remedy matters

¹ A. F. Rockwell, "From Mentor to Elberon," in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXII, p. 433.

² Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 34.

by a letter of June 12, strenuously warning him against the dangers he foresaw.¹ "First of all, I beg of you to make no promises to anybody. I have seen such misfortunes resulting from hasty promises by Presidential candidates that I am especially anxious to impress the point. . . . Please don't make any journeys, or any speeches. . . . There is no place where you can do so much for your supporters and be so comfortable yourself, from now on until November, as on your farm."

Garfield realized that in Reid he had a friend so situated as to do him unique service and from this date he turned confidently to him for advice and information on New York political matters. Their correspondence is of the first importance as an index to policies and problems. Writing on June 14, Garfield replied to Reid: "Yours of the 12th inst. is received just as I am leaving for Washington. I preferred to stay here but I have so many papers there which no one but myself can gather up, that it seems necessary that I have them soon. I shall make the trip as quietly and quickly as possible and you may be sure I shall continue as I am, wholly untrammelled by pledges."

The Washington trip was made under the concentrated observation of newspaper reporters, eager to pick up indications of Garfield's policy, especially as to his attitude toward political friends. It was impossible for him to exchange the most ordinary civilities with a leading man without having political inferences telegraphed all over the country. He collected his papers, saw a few individuals and presently returned to Ohio, but in these few hours enough happened to start the long chronicle of tittle-tattle and gossip. The supposedly significant fact was that Garfield saw Blaine but did not see Conkling, and the political consequences of such a discrimination loomed up as alarming to most Republican leaders. Reid (June 26) wrote to Garfield reporting that he had learned, through Senator Plumb as intermediary, disquieting reports of Conkling's state of mind, owing to his failure to receive any "distinct message concerning the cam-

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 35.

paign" from the nominee, and of "the very bitter talk in which he is indulging."

"Plumb went on," continued Reid, "to express great anxiety as to the tone of your letter of acceptance, particularly with reference to the Civil Service, saying that if the working politicians got from your letter the impression that your administration would be materially like that of Hayes it would do infinite harm. The Conkling men," he added, "will look upon you with suspicion, because they have heretofore looked upon you as a spokesman and defender of Hayes." In fact, so sensitive was Conkling on this point that the mere rumor that Garfield had been seen with Schurz had been enough to arouse his deepest suspicions. "It presently came out," continued Reid, "that Conkling had called, found you absent and subsequently learned that while he was waiting at your door you were riding publicly with Schurz which was just the sort of thing calculated to make an impression on him." Reid then suggested "some intimation, either in the letter of acceptance or in a communication through a known friend to the effect that you have no idea of conducting the administration without reference to, or independently of the leading men of the Republican party, and that you would naturally consult with the men whom the people have selected and put forward."

In reply Garfield began the task of denying rumors and reassuring his friends. "Here are the facts," he wrote, "1. I went to Blaine's house and had a full, long and cordial talk with him. 2. I called on Conkling at his hotel and he returned my call but I happened to be out. Thereupon I wrote him a note requesting him to name an hour of the next day when I might see him at his room but I have received no reply. 3. I called at the Interior Department on business and in going out Schurz, who was going to the cabinet meeting, rode with me as far as the Riggs House. 4. My friends telegraphed to Arthur to meet me in Washington when I was there but he did not come. I wrote him the day before I left Washington asking for suggestions in regard to the National Committee and other things and invited him to visit me at Mentor. Yesterday I received his reply, cordial, pleas-

ant and saying he would come some time during the summer; also received a telegram yesterday urging me to come to New York. This I am not inclined to do. I have made all reasonable personal advances for harmonious action. 5. The Grant and Blaine men will have no grounds for complaint about my letter of acceptance if I can help it. . . . I should cordially welcome suggestions about the letter from Conkling and Blaine. The latter I will write to. I cannot now open a correspondence with the former. He must do that and will find me cordial but I shall not begin again."

Referring to Conkling's behavior, Garfield wrote to Blaine on the same day (June 29): "In one quarter silence. The Oracles are dumb and seem not yet to have determined whether it shall be peace or war." The explanation of Conkling's peculiar conduct, given in his biography, written much later, is "that he was unwilling to trust to Mr. Garfield's imperfect memory of a private conversation, however unimportant. Mr. Conkling desired no pledges. . . . In fact, he detested pledges in politics." Therefore he "warily avoided Garfield."¹ This is probably an explanation constructed much later, after subsequent events had colored Conkling's recollections. If Reid's story is authentic, and it is wholly compatible with Conkling's known habits, he was perfectly ready to confer until he learned that Schurz also had the same privilege. Then his detestation of the advocate of Civil Service Reform overcame whatever willingness he had hitherto had for an interview.

What Garfield wanted to do was to come to a good understanding with all the elements in the Republican party, to assure them of fair treatment and win their confidence in his personal good will and absence of factional commitments. This was indicated by his letter to Arthur and by his calling on Conkling, both of which efforts were defeated in whole or in part. A letter to Grant of a month later shows a similar spirit. In inviting him to come to Mentor he said (July 26): "I neither sought nor desired the nomination . . . but since it came to me, I am anxious to do my whole duty to the coun-

¹ Conkling, *Life of Roscoe Conkling*, p. 611.

try. Certainly no American is so well able by an experience wholly unequalled in our history as you, to aid in bringing our people into harmony and assuring the success of our party."

In like manner Garfield expressed his views to Foster, the Ohio representative on the Republican National Committee, on the important matter of the selection of a campaign chairman and secretary. He said, in a letter of June 29: "I write to you to offer some suggestions on the organization and work of the Committee. I understand that it has been the custom of the Committee to consult the Candidates on the National ticket in reference to the selection of Chairman and Secretary because of the somewhat close and confidential relation which must exist between these officers and the candidates in the conduct of the campaign." He called attention to the fact that all the committeemen were chosen at the convention before the nomination was made and therefore bore no especial relation to him. "This fact," he added, "does not in the least embarrass me, for I presume and believe that all are anxious to make the ticket successful." He then went on to outline the probable strategic points of the campaign and to make suggestions for committee officers with them in view. "It is clear that in the North, to which we must in the main look for success, there are two centers of contest. The one is New York with the two adjacent states, Connecticut and New Jersey and the other is Indiana. The first, being the greater theater, should be the Headquarters of the campaign and the campaign chairman should be selected with a view to his familiarity with the political elements in that quarter, and his general acquaintance with the leading Republicans of the whole country."

Not knowing whether the committee wished him to make a positive selection, he confined himself to naming four men as suitable, Eugene Hale, W. E. Chandler, R. C. McComins and Marshall Jewell. He added: "I shall be glad if the Committee can secure the services of Thomas C. Platt as secretary. His acquaintance with the political elements in the State of New York would make his services of great value to the committee. I hope the committee will take measures to

push the campaign in Indiana as early and as actively as possible. I think also, we should make a vigorous and determined effort to encourage the Republicans in some of the hopeful states in the South, notably North Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, for I think it possible to carry these states."

On the same day Garfield notified Arthur of his letter to Foster and urged him to discuss all matters of interest relating to the national committee with him. He closed both letters by an earnest wish for complete harmony in the party. With the actual outcome of the matter Garfield seems to have had no further connection. The committee finally settled on ex-Governor Jewell of Connecticut, but because he had been on bad terms with Grant when in the latter's cabinet, Logan of Illinois was allowed to salve the dissatisfaction of the Stalwarts by naming Senator Dorsey, a regular machine politician, as secretary.¹

At the same time Garfield took up the problem of writing the letter of acceptance, which, according to a custom now firmly established, was regarded as the personal contribution of the candidate to the campaign, based, of course, upon the party platform but indicating to some degree his individual tendencies. For Garfield this also, like everything else he did or said, was looked at mainly from the point of view of its possible effect in bringing party harmony. From all sides poured in advice, suggestions and anxious warnings lest by inadvertance he should say anything that might chill the Grant men, the "306." They were the persons who, above all, must be conciliated, not merely because they had been beaten at the convention, but because they were in very ill temper with Hayes's administration methods and might easily be driven into a ruinous abstention from support if the candidate did not reassure them. In the minds of scores of Garfield's political advisers, he was absolutely compelled to purchase the support of Conkling and his followers or risk certain defeat. That this group, merely out of loyalty, should take an active part in electing Garfield was not apparently supposed for an instant. In plain language, these

¹ J. M. Forbes, *Letters and Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 196.

men had the whip hand, and it was Garfield's business somehow to induce them to support him. Needless to say this was an irksome and distasteful business.

It was his first idea that a plain intimation that he would not follow Hayes's peculiar methods ought, if put in the letter of acceptance, to be sufficient assurance. His views of the situation and of the proper policy were set forth in a letter to Reid of June 29, above quoted, to the effect that "the Grant and the Blaine men will have no grounds for complaint about my letter of acceptance if I can help it." To Blaine, writing the same day, he said: "I have not yet touched the letter of acceptance, but must do so very soon, and now I want your help. Please write me your suggestions on any phase of it you please but especially on these points. 1. The Chinese question. You know the platform is pretty full on that subject, but our Pacific coast friends are anxious. Please write such a paragraph as you would use. 2. The Civil Service plank. You have seen how it was added and you know what a wretched business it has been for years. No phase of it would stand the school-masterish examinations and the absurd attempt to get on without the aid of Congressmen in making selections. I believe in party government, and that the spirit and doctrines of the Republican party should prevail in the Executive departments. But I do not wish to do anything which will alienate the doctrinaires from our support. Now please give me your best thoughts on the subject and embody them in a paragraph. 3. The Southern Question. 4. The silver question, and finally anything else that is in your heart. Please write me as soon as possible."

Garfield could count, of course, upon Blaine's wholehearted support, but, for all that, a certain amount of adjustment was needed in his case, for Blaine, whose "faith in management" had often been commented on by Garfield, had been as much opposed to Hayes's methods as was Conkling. The foregoing letter was undoubtedly intended not only to invite Blaine's coöperation, but to reassure him on the question of "spoils" and Civil Service examinations. Its tone is noticeably conciliatory. At about the same time he

wrote to many others, representing all sorts of elements in the party, asking for suggestions: to Arthur, of the Conkling group; to Jones of the *New York Times*, who had assailed him on the pulpwood matter; to Evarts and to Schurz of Hayes's cabinet. From all of these and from many others he received letters.

Finally he completed his draft and issued it under date of July 10. As it stands¹ it succeeds in being as Garfield intended it to be, quite innocuous to the "306," but in the process of rendering it harmless it had been also rendered insignificant. It was a purely political performance, the first step in the process of "harmonizing the party" to which the successful "dark horse" felt himself impelled. As a statement of Garfield's own views on public issues it deserves small attention. The first topic dealt with, the pacification of the South and the right of the negroes to vote, doubtless represented Garfield's own reaction from the "rider contest" of the past year, but as a manifesto it was almost purely academic. A brief treatment of the national finances, taking satisfaction in the resumption of specie payments, was introduced by the accurate statement that "my views have been so frequently and fully expressed that little is needed in the way of additional statement."

On the tariff question he uttered an orthodox paragraph advocating protection on the ground of different labor costs and also on the ground of national defense in time of war. Not a word indicated that the tariff needed attention or that the surplus revenue presented a difficult problem. Next came an allusion to the desirability of national regulation of the Mississippi,—again a subject in his mind since the session of 1879; and following that a paragraph recognizing the problems presented by Chinese immigration and commending the effort of the Hayes administration to settle it through the treaty power. Here again his own action in fighting the exclusion bill of 1880 inspired his words, doubtless in hopes of preventing misrepresentation of his action in supporting Hayes's veto.

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 782.

Finally he came to the problem of Civil Service Reform and here his words were most carefully chosen and most studiously phrased to conciliate the "306" and the general mass of Republican party workers and professional politicians. In the first place, Garfield distinctly called for the enactment of a civil service law. "Experience has proved," he said, "that with our frequent changes of administration, no system of reform can be made effective without the aid of legislation." In words which rejected Hayes's doctrine of official nonpartisanship he added, "Without depriving any officer of his rights as a citizen, the government should require him to discharge all his official duties with intelligence, efficiency and faithfulness." Lastly followed the sentences which, to the New Yorkers and to all "306" men, were an indication that Garfield intended to continue the usages of the spoils system, as far as concerned Congressional control over offices. "To select wisely from our vast population those who are best fitted for the many offices to be filled, requires an acquaintance far beyond the range of any one man. The Executive, therefore, should seek and receive the information and assistance of those whose knowledge of the communities in which the duties are to be performed best qualifies them to aid in making the wisest choice."¹

To anyone who has followed Garfield's history in connection with appointments to office, it is evident that he committed no apostasy in uttering these sentiments regarding the Civil Service. They were about what he had been saying for a dozen years. In the same way, his language on the tariff was not different in principle from his earliest statements, for from 1864 to 1880 he invariably regarded difference in cost of production as the basic justification for protection. But in both fields the striking and the discouraging thing was that he omitted to employ any words which would show that he felt reform either of "senatorial courtesy" or of exorbitant tariff rates to be necessary. In fact, the word "reform" was purposely excluded. In every detail of emphasis and choice of words the whole message was written to

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 786.

placate the "Old Guard" and the complete avoidance of the problems of reform was part of the process.

It is interesting to observe that while Garfield followed the advice and almost the language furnished in Reid's letter of June 26 on the Civil Service, Blaine, in his brief answer to Garfield's long letter requesting suggestions, made no comment whatever on this subject. In fact, Blaine's only specific suggestion was that Garfield ought to take ground against Chinese immigration, and he declined to send any "copy," saying that the letter ought to be in Garfield's own phraseology (July 4, 1880). Blaine, like his enemy Conkling, was interested chiefly in men and offices, not measures.

As was to be expected, the reception of the message by the press was a purely partisan affair. The Republican journals called it an able and clear statement and a strong firm document; the Democrats found it weak and halting. Such would have been the comments on any letter whatever. So far as satisfying the "Stalwarts" went, it had achieved its object. The Independent and reforming elements were, on the other hand, seriously displeased with its tone and substance. The *Nation* (July 15, 1880) called it "a cruel disappointment to those Independents who had hoped to find in it a trumpet-call. It recalls very unpleasantly General Garfield's rôle at the convention of moderator and harmonizer. It will tend to revive the spirits of the Stalwarts. What we miss is a personal tone, giving an added dignity to the canvass and kindling in the party an honest enthusiasm for higher aims and ideas." And a week later it said even more strongly, "The unworthy phrases in which Mr. Garfield's ideas are concealed or his old-time professions recanted betray a want of backbone."

Garfield found in his mail not a few protesting letters from sorrowful reforming friends, including some that he could not afford to ignore. To Schurz he wrote at length (July 22), answering a long and severe criticism of the letter, on financial matters and on Civil Service Reform. "I thank you," replied Garfield, "for your frank and faithful criticism, and with equal frankness let me say that I do not think my letter of acceptance is a surrender of any essential

point gained by the present administration. On the subject of finance I did not dream that any one could doubt my attitude. 'The key to sound money is, I think, contained in my phrase 'to maintain the equality of all our dollars.' Can any sound money man suggest a more radical creed? Remember, I was not writing an inaugural message nor an exhaustive essay on finance but a brief campaign summary of Republican doctrine. On the subject of Civil Service there is more room for difference of judgment, because there are real differences of opinion among Republicans. But I have been saying for several years past, that the pressure of public opinion should be brought to bear upon Congress, rather than upon the President to make any reform in that direction. If the President will sketch the outline of a bill fixing a tenure of office for all minor offices and prescribing the grounds on which removals are to be made and, in a message urge its passage, he will concentrate the weight of public opinion upon Congress and some action will at last be compelled. So long as he makes the fight with Congress a concrete one, involving the personality of each appointee, Congress, or rather the Senate, will beat him half the time or more. If he makes it a fight of general principles with no personality involved in the contest, he can win. In short in my letter of acceptance I have sought to shift the battleground from the person of the appointee to the principles on which the office shall be held. Of course, I may be in error but I think I am right. If any one thinks I have surrendered to Congressional dictation other than by legislation, such a one will find himself greatly mistaken if the trial comes.

. . . I do not think Horace White is justified in treating my letter as a surrender to the machine. He ought to remember that all the pressure and pride of my public life are behind me to project into future action what I have so long advocated, and that I have distinctly referred to my public record for my opinions. . . . Some of these gentlemen treat my letter as though I had never spoken before. . . . I have made no terms of concession with the New York wing, but have trusted to time and the pressure of the campaign."

Evidently disturbed by these criticisms and by the com-

ments in the press, Garfield turned to Hinsdale and suggested that he might come to his support in a written article. "Of course I am unwilling to write or say anything new which shall be or appear to be an addendum to my letter of acceptance," he observed (July 5). Repeating what he said to Schurz about the plan of laying a proposal before Congress, he amplified it a little by giving the heads of his scheme. "Its chief features should be: (a) For the minor offices, including clerks, a fixed term, say four years. (b) A carefully drawn provision enumerating the grounds on which such officers shall be removed. (c) A provision that protects the officer from removal on other grounds. Of course these provisions should not apply to Cabinet and Bureau officers who should be chosen with reference to the policy of the administration as well as to their personal fitness for the places they hold. While the executive attempts by mere regulation to fight the battle alone it will not only be a losing contest, but every new administration will adopt its own regulations and make the confusion more confounded.

. . . In short, I sought in my letter to lift the movement for reform to a higher plane which would harness Congress into the work of making a permanent betterment of the service. Again, I think Hayes made a mistake in theoretically holding that Congressmen should not be consulted. He meant justly that they should not dictate appointments. In the latter he was wholly right. But he can do his work far better, after he has availed himself of their knowledge of persons and localities and then independently uses his own discretion. If our Independent friends would take these views of the subject they can make my lead effective for good. If they treat my letter as a surrender to the machine, a letting down of the standard, they will hurt the cause and cripple me."

The foregoing letters reveal with perfect distinctness the strong and the weak points in Garfield's general attitude on public questions. When confronted with an evil and at the same time conscious of the practical obstacles in the way of applying an immediate remedy, he sought to secure such action as he thought practicable and useful, even if it left

the main problem untouched. This is a characteristic legislative attitude of mind, the natural device of a parliamentarian who prefers to bring forward something that will have a chance of passing, rather than to propose a plan that involves striking a direct blow and raising possibly insuperable antagonisms. In this case the strong point in Garfield's plan was that it evaded the main difficulty, that of dislodging the senators and representatives from their control over appointments in their districts, and sought to prevent purely political removals. This would have been an admirable first step, but no more. So long as the selection of federal appointees in the states was left to be settled by the advice of Congressmen, the essential feature of the spoils system would remain untouched. One is strongly led to surmise that Garfield thought out this particular program of Civil Service Reform because it was the one imaginable plan that would enable him to offer something to the reformers without offending the spoilsmen. The imperative necessity of not offending the Grant men, without whose aid Republican success was impossible, stood foremost in all his utterances and thoughts. Whether, if his life had been spared, he would have been content with so incomplete a plan for Civil Service Reform may well be doubted. Garfield was a man who could learn by experience and the severe lessons taught him by the first three months of his term appear to have convinced him that the regulation of removals alone would not solve the problem of appointments.

The letter of acceptance, with all its concessions to the "Stalwarts," failed to settle the problem of their conciliation. It had hardly been out a week when Garfield's managers began to suggest that a trip to New York by him in person might be a political necessity, and presently a succession of letters came trooping in, all to the same purport; that the noncommittal language of the letter of acceptance was not enough; that some positive hearty action showing that Garfield welcomed—in fact, invited—the support of the Conkling element was necessary if the campaign in New York was to be a success. The matter was put with the utmost baldness by W. E. Chandler in a letter of July 24:

"I think that Senator Conkling and his friends are entitled to feel assured that if you are elected they will not be treated as they were by President Hayes. No greater outrage was ever committed than that upon Arthur and Cornell by the present administration. It was intended to break them down in New York; and they may be excused for wanting to feel sure this time that they will not be persecuted. The state of New York is important, probably vital and it is worth while, perhaps to stoop a little to conquer much." Chandler suggested that an hour's private conversation in which Garfield could say things that would satisfy Conkling without committing himself unduly was the proper policy.

Garfield's first impulse was utterly adverse to any such journey or any such effort to soothe Conkling. He wrote to Reid (July 21): "I am anxious to avoid the visit to New York and I really think it will be better not to go. My letter of acceptance has paid all to the regulars that they can reasonably ask, and has considerably tried the temper of the independents. A visit soon would be misconstrued. Anything that should be or appear to be a bargain with any of the parties there would do great harm. I have made no terms or committals to any one. I am every way as free as I was the minute after the nomination except so far as the letter of acceptance commits me. In that I sought to say what I am willing to stand for to the end and discarded brilliant points for the sake of permanent ground to stand on." But to men like Chandler such a line of thought was immaterial. What they wanted to see was an outright deal between Garfield and Conkling, in which the former should purchase the hearty support of the latter in the coming campaign by promising him in advance the control over the New York federal offices in case he was elected.

Garfield wrote to Chandler a six-page letter, July 26. "It would be a good idea," he said, "to meet the National Committee at New York. Furthermore," he went on, "to speak directly to the point, I am entirely willing and indeed should be glad, to see Mr. Conkling; and I have no fear that he would ask any unreasonable thing, or wish me to do anything which it would be in the slightest degree dishonorable

for me to perform." The difficulty in any New York journey lay in its probable effect upon the Independents and "that class of voters who live between the lines of the two great parties. I ask you to consider the effect of my visit to New York upon these classes of allies. . . . Is there," he asked, "any good reason why the Senator cannot come to Ohio? General Grant has expressed his purpose to visit me on his return from the West and the two might meet here, or at any near point, without embarrassments and thus avoid all misconstruction. . . . I have no patience," he concluded, "with that feeling, which so many indulge in, that a candidate is in danger of being owned and run by somebody. If I cannot maintain a reasonable independence and still have the fullest consultation with all my Republican comrades, I deserve to be run and owned by any one who is better able to manage me than I am myself. . . . I will not be unduly stubborn, but I ought to know the grounds on which my friends base their advice. If it is thought best for me to go there should be a general gathering of the Committee and leading members of the party. Blaine should be there, perhaps Grant and Sherman, so that there shall be wider public reasons than the meeting of two men."

Against this position Garfield's advisers took stronger and stronger ground. Some extracts from a letter of July 26 from Dorsey, the secretary of the national committee, will give a good idea of the extreme pressure to which he was subjected. "I repeat with all the earnestness I have, that in my judgment it is a duty which you owe to yourself and to the Republican party to be here on the 5th of August regardless of what Mr. Jewell says or Mr. George William Curtis or Mr. Anybody else. . . . I insist that a conference with Governor Cornell and Senator Conkling is an absolute essential to success in this campaign. I have been told within the last four or five hours that when this question was suggested to you, you made the natural inquiry as to what these people wanted to see you about. My reply to that is that they want to know whether the Republicans of the State of New York are to be recognized . . . or whether the 'Scratchers' and Independents and 'feather-heads' are to

ride over the Republican party of this state as they have for the last four years. They not only want to know that but they intend to know it and they can only be satisfied by a personal conference with you. . . . I believe that a discussion of thirty minutes with the persons named will settle for all time the doubt that exists in their minds. What we want is the State of New York and we want to do whatever is necessary to secure it, so it does not imply dishonor or indignity. I wish you would telegraph me immediately when you will start and how you prefer to come . . . so you will meet with that ovation which the candidate of a great party ought to receive."

On the twenty-eighth Garfield wrote in the journal: "Dorsey writes it is now inevitable that there will be serious trouble with Conkling and his friends if I do not go. I am very reluctant to go. It is an unreasonable demand that so much effort should be made to conciliate one man. But to resist the opinion of the whole Committee would be ungracious and perhaps unwise." "July 29 Telegrams indicate a general feeling that I should go to New York." His letters of these dates reveal emphatically his sense of the undignified nature of the situation. Writing to Dorsey, July 28, after repeating the substance of what he said earlier to Reid and Chandler, he emphatically rejected the idea of a private colloquy. "If I go," he said, "there must be a general gathering. It will be a mistake and failure, to attempt any quiet meeting. The more public and general the better, if it is held at all. But I want you to think of the danger we run of hurting our Independent allies."

Finally, with a reluctant heart, he decided to yield to the general demand and attend the committee meeting, but he took care to announce his decision to those friends whom he knew to be in agreement with his view. To G. W. Curtis, who had sent him a sharply worded protest and warning, he wrote a reassuring note, explaining that he went to New York at the unanimous advice of the National Committee. "They not only requested it," he said (July 30), "but declare that it is vitally necessary to their successful work. I reached these conclusions with great reluctance, but I hardly

think I ought to refuse the unanimous request of those to whom the conduct of the campaign has been entrusted." The one thing that Garfield reiterated to all his correspondents was his unshakable determination to make no pledges. "If any part of the purpose of this meeting is to secure any concession to the New York men who are sulking, they will find no help in me beyond what I should give to any Republican," he wrote to Hayes (July 31).

To Blaine, Garfield sent a confidential letter saying (July 30): "My dear friend, you must stand by me. Many of our friends who have written me think there are evidences that a few leaders in New York meditate treachery and say that the visit will either prevent it or so develop it that the country will understand it and place the responsibility where it belongs. Of one thing you may be assured, there shall be no surrender to any unreasonable demands. I will do nothing to compromise myself or the noble men who stand up to the fight. . . . I want you to find the exact situation, if possible before I arrive, I want to know how large a force C has behind him and just what the trouble is. I will not be treated as a suspected Republican. If I cannot have comradeship with the leaders of the party, there shall be no relations whatever. . . . If the Republicans want to repel the Independents they want the party defeated."

The New York visit, so important in the intensely personal diplomacy of the moment, has been described in newspapers and in reminiscences mostly in unfriendly terms. Garfield's own comments on it in his journal are somewhat carefully set down from the time he took the train on August 3 at Mentor until he returned to his home, August 9, every instant in the full blaze of publicity and incessantly called upon to speak. The diary records being met at every station by a "great concourse," "great crowds at Dunkirk," "At Buffalo not less than 50,000." He wrote home from Buffalo (August 4): "The demonstrations of yesterday and last night have hushed me into something like awe—perhaps superstitious. Men of all shades of Republicanism and of every grade of prominence are joining us to make the journey to New York. Of course it is too early to judge of the

outcome, but the more sanguine ones among us, say that the sulkers will be burned out in the fire of this human prairie . . . " (broken off). At New York he met "a vast assemblage." Garfield's speeches were studiously pitched in a nonpolitical key. At the end of the journey he observed, "I think no harm has been done." All along the way local Republican politicians and public men came to greet him, and he noted with especial keenness the attitude of the "Conkling crowd." "At Albany," he records, "Governor Cornell and General C. A. Arthur came on board. The former accompanied us to Hudson, the latter to New York. Chauncey M. Depew also went with us to New York."

Garfield reported the conference itself at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. "At noon the Conference was held in the hotel parlor and speeches were made by Blaine, Logan, Sherman and many others. The absence of Senator Conkling gave rise to unpleasant surmises as to his attitude. His friends were embarrassed and somewhat indignant(?). I think his friends are showing zeal and enthusiasm and will work whether he does or not. There shall neither be nor appear to be, if I can prevent it, any mortgaging of my future freedom. . . . Had a long and friendly talk with Blaine. He is the prince of good fellows. Have asked L. P. Morton to take the Chairmanship of the Committee on Finance. He will do it." The next day he continued: "W. W. Phelps of New York drove me to Whitelaw Reid's house and Jay Gould came and we had a conversation on the campaign. I think he will help. Had, in the afternoon a long interview with Morton, Crowley, Arthur and Platt." This is all that Garfield had to say on the meeting in the journal. For any account of what was said one must depend entirely upon statements coming from the other side.

But before considering that disputed point, notice should be taken of the peculiar behavior of Conkling in absenting himself from the conference. His biographer explains this as another example of his avoidance of any private conference with a man whose honesty he distrusted and whose purposes he suspected to be to entrap him into some sort of bargain. "Mr. Conkling," he said, "was not willing to be a party to

any agreement with the candidate that required secrecy. He desired no pledges concerning the control of patronage in New York" (p. 617). In one sense this is probably true. Conkling did not favor pledges; for they limited his freedom of action. He meant to take every trick and preferred to be entirely unhampered. In this case, however, it was not Garfield, of course, but Conkling's followers—Arthur, Platt, Morton, Crowley—who wanted the pledge and his absence was a distinct annoyance to them, for his sulking, at the time when they were trying to "bring off a deal," was certain to cause suspicions. It is quite possible, however, that Conkling's absence had a personal reason. Reid reported to Garfield (August 15),¹ hearing through a friend of Conkling, that "it was George William Curtis that drove him away from the conference; not Blaine or Sherman." These it would seem he could have endured, but the idea of "confering" with Mr. Curtis was too much for him.

What was said in the "long interview"? According to Platt and Arthur, the main subject discussed was the control over federal offices in New York, and Garfield with perfect readiness and in the most unqualified terms promised that he would appoint no man who was not specifically approved by the Conkling machine and in addition promised to Morton that if he would assume the duties of chairmanship of the Committee on Finance, he should have the option of any one of several important federal positions, including the Secretaryship of the Treasury. Summarizing Platt's account, in his *Autobiography*, published in 1910, as the fullest, it assumed, to begin with, that the interview was "for the purpose of making terms with the prospective president." Next he says that although Conkling declined to be present, on account of his distrust of Garfield's honesty, he assured his friends "that he would abide by their action in whatever they decided to do" (p. 127). Then as to the conference between Garfield on one side and Arthur, Crowley, Morton and Platt on the other, he states that he informed Garfield plainly that unless he would "recognize and reward" the dominant faction in the state instead of the "seventeen who rebelled

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 37.

from the delegation at Chicago," they would retire from all active work in the canvass.¹

To this, according to Platt, Garfield replied by disavowing any intention of continuing Hayes's practices, and then went on to say: "He declared that he knew that the dominant power in the State of New York was the friends of Grant and Conkling; that they were in control of the party machinery and he could not be elected without their cordial support. He did not want to change the order of things but desired us to take hold with zeal and energy and insure his election. If this was done, he assured us that the wishes of the element of the party we represented should be paramount with him touching all questions of patronage. While it would be his duty to give such decent recognition of and show proper gratitude to the rebellious element at Chicago that had rendered his nomination possible, yet, in dispensing these favors, he would consult with our friends and do only what was approved by them. These assurances were oft repeated and solemnly emphasized and were accepted and agreed to by all those present."

In the biography of Conkling there is a somewhat similar account, derived from "a gentleman who was present," which says that Garfield announced his intention to appoint one cabinet officer from New York, and "to consult and be guided by the state organization, the Senators, Governor, Congressmen, etc., in making all appointments of federal officials within the state."² A still further account in A. B. Paine's *Thomas Nast* (p. 487), purporting to be derived from Arthur, is clearly erroneous in that it shows Arthur acting as go-between and as having authority from Garfield "to make any arrangement that would bring them into line. . . . It was then understood between us that Conkling and Platt should control the New York patronage and it was with this assurance that they worked for the ticket."

How much truth is there in this story? In the first place, it is to be noted that Garfield himself was at the moment

¹ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 130.

² Conkling, *Life of Roscoe Conkling*, p. 612.

wholly ignorant of the possible existence of any such bargain. Summing up in his journal the results of the journey he wrote (August 9): "Very weary but feeling that no serious mistake has been made and probably much good has been done. No trades, no shackles and as well fitted for defeat or victory." In the letters that he wrote after returning to Mentor he evidently took great satisfaction in having smoothed matters over without having a dispute over pledges. August 11, for instance, he wrote to Jewell: "So far as I know, our friends everywhere feel that no serious mistake has been made and much good accomplished. Let me know what the echoes are since the trip is over." A few days later he asked Reid, who of all men hated Conkling: "Do you know how Arthur, Platt or Cornell are feeling since the conference? I do not hear from either of them. My letters indicate that the New York trip did no harm and much good, but I suppose people do not write me the worst side of things and I try to make allowances. What is the feeling of the gentlemen I met at your house? I rely greatly upon your knowledge of the men in New York to keep me acquainted with the current of affairs." If Garfield had just bought the support of these men, by a contract, signed, sealed and delivered, he would not have felt it necessary to inquire of Reid about their "feelings."

It is from the contrast between these letters of Garfield just quoted and the language used about the interview by Platt and Arthur that the impossibility of any real agreement between them is revealed. Politics, as the perfectly frank exposition in Platt's autobiography shows, was a purely business matter, to be regulated by positive, precise agreements in the nature of contracts. What Platt and the rest wanted was just one thing, the continued control over the federal patronage in New York, and the persons whom they particularly desired to exclude from any office in the state were those men who had defied their leadership by voting for Blaine and Sherman at the Chicago convention. Unless and until they were promised this control they were not prepared to lift a finger to assist the Garfield campaign. And since it was the business of Garfield to purchase their

support by this one definite promise, he must take the initiative.

To Garfield, on the contrary, the idea of such pledges was utterly abhorrent. It was his idea that politics should be managed on the basis of mutual confidence. Persons should support him, their candidate, because he was the party nominee, and if any doubts existed in their minds as to the future they should all be laid aside upon his assurance that he intended to treat all factions and persons fairly. Details could be left to be adjusted. It was his feeling that Conkling, Platt and the New Yorkers should realize from his personal kindness and absence of rancor that he was the sort of man in whom they could safely trust. When he went to New York he hoped to conquer suspicion and smooth over resentment and win cordial support by establishing friendly and frank relations. That is what lay in his mind when inquiring as to the feelings of the New York leaders.

That Garfield actually gave the "pledge" as described by Platt is inconceivable to anyone who was familiar with his political and personal standards. It would have been such a departure from his uniform practice as to be practically revolutionary. Furthermore, as will be shown later in the narrative, the pledge itself—to be controlled in all New York appointments by the wishes of the Conkling faction—was not brought forward at the very moment when, if it really existed, such a course would have been the only natural one to take.

The element of probable truth underlying the Platt account may be conjectured somewhat as follows. Knowing the sensitiveness of the New Yorkers over Hayes's methods regarding nominations to federal offices, Garfield, who had himself condemned those methods, undoubtedly assured them that he would "consult" with the New York Senators regarding appointments. He had said as much in the letter of acceptance. In all likelihood he told them—and in this Platt's account is interesting in that it is the only source for this statement—that he felt in honor bound to "recognize" the element who had voted for him at Chicago, *i.e.*, the so-called "Independents," but that there would be no

discrimination against the "Regulars." Anything less than this would not have satisfied the four politicians.

In this Garfield doubtless felt that he was assuring them of "fair play" and that that was all he had promised. Doubtless he was bound to "consult them," but that, as will be shown later, meant no more than the word signified. On the other hand the four machine politicians confronting him read into that word "consult" the connotation that he would be bound by their "advice" or counsel. In other words, when he said he would "consult" he was giving a "pledge" to make no appointments in New York without preliminary "consultation" and, as a necessary consequence, the approval of the New York Senators. This they felt was their purchase price. What Platt wrote, years afterward, was his recollection of what he gathered from Garfield's efforts to create an atmosphere of confidence. It all came back to the one word "consult." Such is the most obvious supposition to make as to the contents of the "long interview," a supposition in keeping with the mental habits of all the parties concerned. That it is probably the correct one will be shown by corroborative evidence at the proper point in the narrative.

Some New Yorkers still felt that the object of the whole trip was defeated by Conkling's abstention and tried to bring about a meeting. This was blocked by Garfield, who had gone as far as he was willing. To Murat Halsted, who was present, Garfield remarked,¹ "I have an invitation to make a trip to Coney Island, and it means that I may there have a pocket interview with my Lord Roscoe; but if the Presidency is to turn on that I do not want the office badly enough to go." "And he did not go," added Halsted. "The words are precisely Garfield's." On August 7, in company with Halsted and a group of Congressmen, he returned via the Erie Railroad, stopping overnight at the Chautauqua Lake assembly, where he spent Sunday. The next day, after further demonstrations at stations, he finally reached home. "Took the four-fifty train for Mentor and at six-fifteen was at the table with my dear ones."

¹ M. Halsted, "The Tragedy of Garfield's Administration," in *McClure's Magazine*, Vol. VI, p. 275.

The results of this conference, as described to Garfield by his correspondents, were supposed to be salutary. The New York leaders, satisfied that they were going to be "consulted" about offices if Garfield was elected, prepared to enter the campaign with a proper vigor. It would appear that Conkling's lieutenants told him plainly that his continued sulking would endanger their chances of controlling patronage, and induced him to agree to speak for the ticket. Reid reported (August 15): "Conkling has announced his willingness to go to work and the date for his appearance in New York is fixed. Payn, Platt and others of his close friends have talked to him with great plainness, not to say severity. His answer is that he is in the hands of his friends and will do whatever they ask. They have already asked that he speak first here then in Indiana and Ohio and they are thinking of asking that he also go to Maine. This last, I suspect, would be a hard dose to take, and I doubt whether it will be pressed upon him. Everything I have seen since the conference convinces me that it turned all our way, that every point was made, and that the only one in any way injured by it was Mr. Conkling himself."

For a month now Garfield remained at Mentor and divided his interests between running the farm and keeping an oversight on the campaign. He clung, from the day of the nomination, to the farm administration as to a rock of salvation. His journal has entries regarding hauling oats and mending roofs mixed in with records of political letters and calls. The record of the results of threshing, July 30 and 31, assumes almost equal importance with that of the New York conference a few days later. But after the return from the New York trip the burdens of the campaign settled down more and more heavily on the candidate and the household was reorganized more or less on a working basis. A small one-room building near the house was utilized as an office and here all correspondence was handled, mail opened and telegrams received. Garfield himself worked in a rear room on the second floor of his house, where he would not be at the mercy of every sightseer, but he was incessantly being called downstairs to meet visitors or delegations. For

a considerable time young Stanley-Brown, his secretary, struggled single-handed with the mass of letters, selecting those which had to be read by the candidate himself, but before the campaign was over, Rose was brought on from Washington to help and O. L. Judd, a telegrapher, was installed in the office with a special wire. In addition, numerous friends served as volunteer helpers from time to time, notably Major Swaim, who helped handle the letters and acted as a political intermediary on occasion. During the campaign Garfield acquired a new political agent in T. M. Nichol, one-time secretary of the "Honest Money League," who came to call at Mentor "with a toothbrush for his only baggage," and remained throughout the rest of the contest, commending himself by his single-minded and, as Garfield felt, highly practical way of dealing with political negotiations.

The journal shows that very many of the visitors, especially those who arrived in the afternoon, spent the night, since there was no hotel near at hand. To make room, the older boys, with Stanley-Brown, slept in the attic, but at times of congestion were sometimes driven to the barn. As the railway station for Mentor was more than a mile away, members of the family were constantly called upon to drive back and forth conveying guests, sometimes going to Painesville, seven miles distant, where express trains stopped. Since the Lake Shore Railroad ran directly across the farm, it was possible for important visitors or delegations, by the courtesy of the railway management, to be left a few hundred yards from the house, which they reached by walking up a lane through the barnyard, and as the summer progressed more and more use was made of this method of approach. The house was thus assailed, from the rear as well as the front, by an unending stream of visitors and curiosity-led sightseers. All who came received a hearty welcome and were taken into the home life with an honesty and simplicity that were part of Garfield's inmost nature.

"There was about him¹ not a trace of the self-consciousness of a successful candidate. His happy spirit appeared to

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 29.

draw nothing of its vitality from the political situation. Sauntering arm in arm with his guests down the lanes of the Mentor farm, his easy, interesting talk was now of the prosperous fields on either hand, and now of bookish things. The impression he left was of a mind and personality equally strong, original and lovable." "During the campaign, with its cares and anxieties," wrote A. F. Rockwell,¹ "its labors and fatigues, its slanders and assaults, there was for him one perpetual fountain of sunshine and comfort in the love and endearments of home and friends. The home life seemed to be a mighty fortress and defense against everything connected with the campaign, which was continually relegated to the little office, a building appropriately detached from the house. At all other times and places, one was reminded only of a quiet, simple, happy country home. At the table the master of the house was the ruling spirit. Fun, fact, fancy, reminiscence, quotation, anecdote flowed from his lips in variety and profusion."

Among those who paid Garfield a visit was his old friend Corydon Fuller. His description of what he saw on June 23 is worth reproducing.² "We arrived at the farm of Mr. Garfield about 10 o'clock. I found him in the little office, dictating letters to two stenographers while in one corner of the room lay a pile of newspapers sufficient to fill a large wagon-box. He had about five thousand unanswered letters and telegrams, and was busily employed upon them. He gave some rapid directions to his secretaries, put on his coat and hat and led me to the carriage which I had hitched at the gate, jumped in himself and made me do so, and taking the lines drove into the yard and down the long lane which leads back north through the farm and across the Lake Shore Railroad. As we drove along, he said he had not desired the nomination he had received, at the present time, but would have preferred to spend a few years in the Senate. He said he did not deny he should have hoped at some future time to receive it, after he had become better prepared to execute its great duties; but as it had come unsought, he should ac-

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 433.

² C. E. Fuller, *Reminiscences of J. A. Garfield*, p. 430.

cept it, and if elected, do the best he could. He showed me the improvements he had made on the farm and others he had planned which were yet to be made; pointed out a fine peach orchard he had planted; stopped a few minutes to give directions to his foreman as to some hay which had been out and which he thought sufficiently cured to be put into the barn. When we reached the yard, he ordered a hired man to put up the horse as he said we were going to stay to dinner. We entered the house through the old-fashioned brick-paved court in the rear, and there by a table was his aged mother, busily engaged pitting some cherries to make pies for dinner. As we came up to her he said, 'Do you know this little old woman?' laying his hand affectionately on her shoulder and adding, 'Mother, don't you remember Corydon?' She gave me a cordial greeting and we passed on into the house."

No candidate of the modest means of Garfield could stand the expenses of so much entertainment without being ruined, and he was compelled to accept the financial assistance of sundry wealthy Cleveland friends, without feeling obligated thereby—it may be added—to offer any of them important governmental positions or any positions at all after his election.

As was to be expected, Garfield was promptly assailed by the Woman Suffragists. H. B. Blackwell of the *Woman's Journal* wrote July 7, asking Garfield's views on the question, and saying that he could support him only if his reply was favorable. Garfield responded (July 17): "While I am earnestly in favor of enlarging the sphere of women's usefulness, I have never seen my way clear to advocating woman suffrage until it was evident that the majority of the women themselves desire it." A little later (August 17) Miss Susan B. Anthony raised the same issue in a formal letter, requesting him to state whether, if elected, he would recommend to Congress the passage of a woman suffrage amendment. At the same time she accompanied her formal request with a personal letter, less peremptory in tone, intimating that a mere mention by him in a message to Congress of woman suffrage as a question worthy of study would be acceptable. It was a well-written and skillful letter. To this Garfield

replied, evading a direct rebuff, but making no concealment of his views. "I assume that all the traditions and impulses of your life," he said, "lead you to believe that the Republican party has been and is more nearly in the line of liberty than its antagonist, the Democratic party. And I know you desire to advance the cause of women. Now, in view of the fact that the Chicago Convention has not discussed your question, do you not think it would be a violation of the trust they have imposed in me to speak of [it] as their nominee and add to the present contest an issue that they have not raised? Again, if I answered your questions on the ground of my private opinion I shall be compelled to say that while I am open to the freest discussion and fairest consideration of your question, I have not yet reached the conclusion that it would be best for the women of the country that she should have the suffrage. I may reach it, but whatever time may do to me, that fruit is not yet ripe on my tree. I ask you therefore for the sake of your own questions, do you think it wise to pick my apples now? Please answer in the frankness of personal friendship."

His old friend, Austin, so long the manager of his Congressional campaigns, now dropped, perforce, into the background when it was no longer a question of the feeling in the Ohio townships of the Western Reserve, but the temper of the whole United States. Yet one finds him still assisting Garfield, notably in keeping him out of the contest for the succession in the nineteenth district and in other local matters. Not even to his most intimate associates would he mention any preference for his Congressional successor.¹

Another rule Garfield adopted was to cease making any use of his Congressional privileges under the spoils system. "I am obliged, under the present circumstances," he wrote, July 16, in refusing to assist an officeseeker, "to adopt a rule declining to make any recommendations for appointments in any of the Departments." Even when one of his friends had been, as he felt, unjustly removed, he would not interpose (Atkins, July 20). This did not save him from faultfinding at the hands of politicians, some in Kentucky

¹ J. A. Howells, July 14.

threatening him with damage in the states of Ohio and Indiana if he refused to interest himself in their demands for federal office. To such he wrote with emphasis (July 23): "The present administration acts upon its own responsibility and I have neither the right nor disposition to interfere. If this course is displeasing to our true Republican friends I regret it but cannot help it." But this did not prevent him from writing to the Commissioner of Pensions in favor of an impoverished veteran, a matter unconnected with offices.

Garfield's correspondence with Jewell and Dorsey shows the keenness with which he followed the development of the campaign in the summer. On July 15 we find him suggesting to Jewell that the party might possibly carry West Virginia and suggesting giving assistance to the state ticket. "I believe," he concluded, "it will be a good investment in every way to aid them. Even if they do not carry the election as they think they will, such gains can be secured as will greatly add to the moral effect of our campaign." On August 12, in a long letter to Jewell, he described a visit by spokesmen of a secret labor organization which had just voted to support him for President, recommending that the national committee send a small sum to secure their aid in Indiana, where they had thirty-one lodges. On the twenty-second he answered a note from J. A. Hubbell, chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee, asking casually, "Please tell me how the Departments generally are doing?" Hubbell's reply showed that he understood this to mean how the Government clerks were contributing. It was the common usage. This letter was destined to reappear later in peculiar circumstances.

As the summer went on, the interests of the veteran campaigner became more and more focused upon the political prospects and by the end of August he began to take an active part in recommending increased attention to Indiana, a state which he regarded as more doubtful than any other northern one. On August 30, following suggestions made by Dorsey, he set forth his views in a long letter to Reid, of which the essential parts are the following: "Assuming that Maine will give us a Republican majority in September, it

is clear to me that Indiana will be a critical turning point of the campaign. I believe that with the requisite effort, we can win that state, and now comes word that New York parties are holding back on the ground that the means better be used in New York rather than in Indiana. It is broadly hinted to me that Conkling is discouraging the efforts to carry Indiana and has to some extent impressed Morton with his views. Now, as Morton has control of the means for that campaign, any weakening on his part in that direction will be serious. Will you please find out for me the character and extent of the efforts that are being made to discourage the giving of this help. Also, whether Morton, as chairman of the Finance Committee, is vigorously at work."

On the same day he wrote an eight-page letter to Arthur, in which, with less blunt language, he endeavored to make the same impression that he did upon Reid. "It is clear to me," he began, "that we are now at the most critical point of the campaign—and the victory will be made certainly possible or seriously imperilled by our management of Indiana during the next fortnight. (In what I now write I assume that we shall carry Maine in September.) If we carry Indiana in October the rest is comparatively easy. We shall make a very serious, perhaps a fatal mistake if we do not throw all our available strength into that state." Garfield then pointed to the fact that there was a Democratic majority of 6,000 to overcome, but that the Republican spirit in the state was so much superior to the Democratic that this could be done by a vigorous effort. The main thing to do was to check importations of voters from neighboring states. "Our friends," he said, "have the full census reports to aid them in checking importations. They say they will be able to secure the friendly co-operation of nearly all the Railroads running into the State. They will have United States supervisors appointed for the first time. They propose to station active and trustworthy Republicans in all the border counties to watch the importing movements of the Democrats. All these plans require the employment of a large number of men and much money. And this brings me to the chief point. It is indispensably necessary that the

means for putting these plans into vigorous execution be furnished at once. Please read this letter to Morton and if you concur in the views I have taken urge him to act as promptly and vigorously as possible."

At the same time he asked Amos Townsend of Cleveland whether "Mr. Rockefeller" would be willing to assist. "Do you know his state of feeling toward me?" he queried. "Is it such that I might safely invite him for consultation and talk freely with him about Indiana and ask his coöperation? Do not think that this relates to the raising of means. Mr. Rockefeller can do what is even more important than that." Townsend's reply shows the extreme odium which already attached to the Standard Oil capitalist. "It would not do for him to visit you, as it would be reported and *cut* like a *knife* in Pennsylvania," wrote the alarmed Townsend (September 3). "He is however, *all right* and will do what he can for your success. It is *risky writing* and you will be wise to keep your hand off paper and keep out of all complications." Yielding to these warnings, Garfield carried on the negotiations through interviews and intermediaries. It would appear that what was desired was that the Rockefeller agencies in Indiana should work for the Republican ticket. A letter from Garfield to Townsend, disregarding the advice to "keep his hand off paper," said (September 7, 1880): "Since you left, the morning mail has brought me a letter from Indiana from which I quote the following sentence; 'Dudley and New are very anxious that Mr. Rockefeller of Cleveland shall back up his Superintendent, Mr. McGregor, who is located at Nashville, Ind., and has charge of their men in that state. He is a live Republican and would like to bring his men into line if Mr. Rockefeller would stand by him at home and he could use 500 more of the right sort if sent.'"

Writing again to Reid (September 2) he urged the giving of strong support to Indiana. "It is hardly possible," he urged, "for any one to have a fuller knowledge of the forces now at work in Indiana than I. The most minute and comprehensive reports are brought to me daily of the operations there, and I do not entertain a doubt that if our friends, who have the work in charge, are adequately supported by

means, we shall carry the state and virtually end the contest." Garfield entered in his diary (September 3) his opinion: "I am still wrestling with the New York Finance committee on the question of giving adequate aid to Indiana. Napoleon won the siege of Toulon, by announcing that Toulon was not in the city but on the point of land projecting in the bay. He planted a battery there that compelled the abandonment of the city by the enemy. So now the Republicans ought to see that, politically speaking, New York is in Indiana and that the capture of the latter state in October ensures New York in November." The journal shows that Garfield held conference after conference at Mentor on the Indiana situation at this time. On September 6 he spent all the afternoon and evening "going over the situation in Indiana" with Filley of St. Louis, Plumb of Kansas, Governor Foster and Townsend of Cleveland. The next day, with F. W. Phillips and Hinsdale, appointments were planned for that state. "Sept. 11 Had a full consultation with Hon. J. N. Tyner on the situation in Indiana."

On the thirteenth of September the Maine state election occurred and the Democratic-Greenback fusion ticket carried the governorship. This Garfield commented on fully in his journal. "I noticed," he wrote, when the returns were coming in, "that we lost in the shipping towns and gained in the manufacturing towns." On the next day he added: "The fact is, our people have claimed too much for Maine and the moral effect of their disappointment will be against us for a while. I did not expect a large majority but I did expect a decisive one. This will make the contest close and bitter through the North. It may turn the scale against us, but I think not." On September 18 he concluded, "Besides the use of money with which the Democrats ambushed our people, it is evident that there was mingled in the contest an element of rebellion against Blaine and his autocracy." On this subject he wrote to Reid (September 15), "I have no doubt that the disappointment our people felt at the result will more thoroughly arouse the country to the danger from the elements of lawlessness and anarchy which so nearly carried that state for the fusion ticket."

The Democratic campaign from an early date took the form of an attack on Garfield's personal fitness, based mainly on the same charges which had played their part in 1874,—the *Crédit Mobilier* "perjury," the salary grab "hypocrisy" and the De Golyer pavement "corruption." On them the changes were rung, little or nothing new being added. Great emphasis was laid on the wording of the Poland committee report, and savage editorials from the *New York Tribune*, *Chicago Daily News* and *Springfield Republican* in February, 1873, were brought to light—the idea being to prove Garfield a corrupt perjurer on Republican testimony. Extracts from Ames's testimony and the committee report, showing that Poland concluded, in the face of Garfield's assertion to the contrary, that he had owned stock, were printed in contrast with reports from Grant and Meade testifying to Hancock's military success and personal good conduct.

The position of *Harper's Weekly* in this campaign was peculiar in that while Curtis, the editor, strongly supported Garfield, Nast, the cartoonist, refused to mention him or bring him into a picture, on the ground of the *Crédit Mobilier* affair, on which he had expressed himself in 1873. In fact, Nast's cartoon of March 15, 1873, against Garfield, was brought out by the Democrats and used for campaign material.¹ Columbia was shown averting her face from a row of discredited public men, among whom was Garfield, identified by the figures 329 written across his forehead. This mystic figure was used by the Democrats as a convenient symbol of Garfield's corruption—and was chalked on fences and on the sidewalk, was printed in newspapers and, as one facetious Republican said, "was stamped on underclothing and the insides of shoes." New charges were invented, of course. The *Washington Post* assailed him for leaving the army in 1863, "preferring a comfortable seat in Congress to a life in the tented field."

Garfield persisted in his intention to make no personal reply to any Democratic charges, but for such a seasoned stump speaker and campaigner to hold complete silence was

¹ A. B. Paine, *Thomas Nast*, p. 434.

a strain on his endurance. Now and then he furnished material to his defenders. On September 6 Hendricks of Indiana made a direct personal assault on Garfield's record at New Orleans in 1876, charging him with interference with the count of votes. Garfield immediately wrote to Benjamin Harrison a letter telling him precisely where he could find documentary material to refute all of Hendricks's charges. "The man," he observed, "must be exceedingly short of material to make such a speech and excessively sore over his loss of the Vice Presidency" (Harrison, September 8).

For campaigning as a speaker no one in the United States was better qualified than Garfield, but in 1880 it was still thought to be undignified and politically unsafe for a candidate to speak at length on the stump. "You can hardly imagine," he wrote to Reid, "how I ached to be free for one day to handle Hendricks as he deserves for his unmanly speech at Indianapolis. I think we have them on the run." The Democratic uproar began to worry Jewell, but this did not shake Garfield's determination. "While I do not shrink from any attack or from any defense necessary to be made," he wrote to Reid (September 2), "I still think that the Democrats are feeling the force and pressure of the tide that is now sweeping against them. They dare not meet the issues raised—a solid South and the business interests of the country—but are seeking to draw us off into personal controversy. I think if our papers and speakers will take this view of the case, it will be far more effective than to follow them into the path into which they wish to lead us. If you concur with my views it may be well for you, in incidental conversation, to strengthen Governor Jewell on these points."

Garfield's letter files contain not a few copies of letters to individuals denying newspaper stories. On September 13 the old tale of Garfield's supposed heavy drinking while chief of staff to Rosecrans had to be dealt with.¹ On October 5 Garfield had occasion to denounce an attack even more disingenuous than that of Hendricks. Writing to J. C. Hamilton he said of a speech by Ex-Governor Seymour: "I have rarely

¹ D. G. Swaim to Captain A. C. Bryant.

been more surprised at anything than that Governor Seymour should be capable of saying what he says in that speech concerning me. He attributes language to me and puts it in quotation marks as though he meant the public to believe that I had used the words he quotes. I have used neither the words nor the ideas that he attributed to me and he is guilty of a gross breach of honor in claiming that I favor the election of Senators for life or any such thing. He evidently has no ground for his allegation, except the fact that in my New York speech I praised Alexander Hamilton and in my letter of acceptance I affirmed the nationality of the General Government. Of course I write this for your own eye only, but you are at liberty to denounce in the strongest terms his pretended quotation as spurious and challenge him to find any such passage in any speech of mine."

Two days later (September 15) we find him writing to Reid concerning an attack on him as advocating disregard of property rights. "I have heard that an absurd attempt is being made to torture an old address of mine, before a college society, into an attack on the corporate rights of property. This cannot be done with justice. In that address I stated some of the dangers connected with the Railway problem, but distinctly asserted that whatever the National Government might undertake to do it should not do injustice to vested rights. Certainly it does not lie in the mouth of any Democrat to assail me on this subject. While I have been a steadfast defender of the public faith in all its forms, that party has constantly assailed it."

A week later Reid brought to Ohio a proposal that Garfield, to clinch the support of New York financial elements, should pledge himself, if elected, to appoint to the next Supreme Court vacancy a man who was known to hold the so-called Thurman Act unconstitutional. Garfield instantly refused. (September 23.) He wrote to Reid, after his departure, a letter not meant for publication, but interesting as showing his *amour propre* on the question of executive independence as well as his own personal record. "It is due to you," he said, "as my trusted friend, that I state the reasons which led me at once to reject the proposition. Any

agreement that should be or appear to be a delegation to any other of the power vested in the Chief Executive implies such a distrust of his faithfulness to his own convictions of duty as I cannot tolerate with self-respect. My life has been so earnestly devoted to the defense of the public faith that I cannot tolerate the suggestion of giving bonds that I will not act otherwise hereafter. I do not care enough for the Presidency to assume its functions under any bonds but my convictions of constitutional duty."

Blaine, in his Eulogy, referred to the campaign of personal abuse in these words:¹ "He was met with a storm of detraction at the very hour of his nomination, and it continued with increasing volume and momentum until the close of his victorious campaign. Under it all he was calm and strong and confident; never lost his self-possession, did no unwise act, spoke no hasty or ill-considered word. Indeed, nothing in his whole life is more remarkable or more creditable than his bearing through these five full months of vituperation. The great mass of these unjust imputations passed unnoticed, and with the general *débris* of the campaign fell into oblivion. But in a few instances the iron entered his soul, and he died with the injury unforgotten, if not unforgiven."

What he undoubtedly meant by the last sentence was the fact that in the excitement of the contest two of Garfield's Democratic friends let themselves be carried beyond all bounds of fair play. One was General Rosecrans, who wrote Garfield a letter of congratulation after his nomination in June, but before the campaign was over had issued a public statement that struck Garfield as so unpardonably disloyal as to lead him to sever all relations. This has been already described in Chapter XXIII. The other, still more to be deplored, was none other than Judge Black, who, like Rosecrans, began by a friendly and congratulatory letter, but ended by publishing an attack in which he went so far as to reverse his own utterances of 1873 and to state that Garfield had actually held *Crédit Mobilier* stock and received divi-

¹ "Eulogy," p. 40.

dends. Such a stab, coupled as it was with a repudiation of all his previous statements, was beyond hope of pardon or oblivion.

During the summer and autumn Garfield attended no less than three reunions of Civil War veterans. The first was that of his own Forty-second, on August 25, at Ashland, where he "made a speech of twenty minutes." Next, at Canton, on September 1, he attended a reunion of President Hayes's regiment, the Twenty-third, on which occasion he was a guest of Major McKinley and again spoke briefly. At both places, he was, of course, the object of great ovations, but followed his custom of resolutely avoiding political subjects. On the twenty-second of September he attended the Reunion of the Army of the Cumberland at Toledo. "General Harrison delivered the Annual Address," he recorded. "I followed in a fifteen minute speech. Just a fair one." The reader will be inclined to differ from this judgment, especially when he realizes the restraint under which Garfield spoke. It was on this occasion, when, if votes had been his object, he would have seized the opportunity to extol the volunteers of 1861, that he paid an admirable and unusual tribute to the professional soldiers of the Rebellion.

At the end of September there was a carefully arranged public demonstration of the "harmony" so laboriously established between Garfield and the New York "Stalwarts." Conkling, as a supreme manifestation of his good will, agreed to make a speech in Warren, Garfield's old fighting ground, and Grant himself accepted an invitation to preside. And now arose one of those delicate questions of propriety which seemed to dog the steps of the sensitive New Yorkers. "The Republican Committee at Warren," wrote Garfield (September 21), "think that hospitality and courtesy demand that I meet General Grant and Senator Conkling at Warren, on the 28th. I think I ought not to go unless I am ready to go on the stump and have so written them." What rendered it doubly uncomfortable was that Garfield's best political friend and benefactor, Harmon Austin, was one of the committee. "I ought not to take the stump on that day," he wrote to Austin, "which is devoted to Mr. Conkling and

who should be the chief speaker. It is his first visit to Ohio and everything ought to be done to give him the most generous welcome and make it understood that it is his meeting. Furthermore I think it would be embarrassing to the speakers who are advocating my election to have me present at their addresses. . . . I am almost inclined to doubt my judgment when I find myself differing from such men as Mr. Perkins and yourself but it seems to me that I am right in this view."

Garfield stuck to this decision, in spite of considerable pressure, and Conkling had "his meeting" at Warren with Grant presiding. His speech, however, could hardly be said to advocate the election of Garfield, so much as the defeat of the Democrats. Austin commented on this in a letter of October 3. Garfield's reply is illuminating. "I am glad that our friends agree that it was well for me not to be at Warren. You had a great meeting and I hope and believe it has done much good. Conkling is a singular compound of a very brilliant man and an exceedingly petulant spoiled child. For myself I do not care to be praised, but it was a narrow and unmanly thing on his part to make such a manifest effort as he has done in Ohio to avoid mentioning the head of the ticket in any generous way. It has become apparent that he, and some of the men who are working with him, are more concerned in running Grant in 1884 than they are for carrying the Republicans safely through the contest of 1880."

On the evening after the Warren meeting, the Conkling-Grant party, on their way to Cleveland, stopped to call on the candidate at Mentor. Garfield recorded (September 28): "The party consisted of General Grant, Senators Conkling and Logan, Congressman Morton and about fifteen gentlemen from Cleveland. Some two hundred citizens came to the house and were introduced to General Grant. C. gave them a lunch and coffee in the dining room. After remaining an hour the party were driven to the station. I had no private conversation with the party but the call was a pleasant and cordial one all around."

Such was Garfield's brief mention of a meeting that stirred great curiosity and some alarm at the time. An impression was created, not only among machine men but

among reformers, that this meeting marked a capitulation of either Conkling or Garfield, or a deal, which came to the same thing. Among many of the anti-Conkling men, great uneasiness was created by the fact that the machine newspapers openly claimed that the support of their chieftain had been purchased, and went so far as to refer to the "Treaty of Mentor."

Platt's autobiography (p. 135) confirms this and gives the exact terms. "Conkling," he says, "exacted a pledge that in all appointments for the federal service in New York State in case of his election, Garfield would consult the United States Senators, etc. . . . and that he would make no appointment for New York unless they were approved by these officials. To this Garfield agreed. I saw Conkling on his return. Conkling told me of the pledge. I asked, 'Have you any faith in Garfield?' Conkling made a wry face, sneered, and replied, 'Not much, but we will try him out.' " This is precise, but entirely false. Not only is it contradicted by the contemporary account in Garfield's journal, but also by the positive statement in Conkling's biography. The latter says that at the time of the Warren speech and the Ohio and Indiana stumping trip, the Garfield campaign was hopelessly lost, but that Conkling's magnanimous efforts turned the tide. The same claim for Grant's influence, it may be added, is made in his biography. When Conkling reached Mentor Garfield's gratitude was almost embarrassing in its fervor, for he is represented as rushing out in the rain to greet him, embracing him and exclaiming: "Conkling, you have saved me. Whatever man can do for man, that will I for you." It took Conkling's utmost skill in securing a newspaper man to stick by his side, to protect himself from a private interview with Garfield, in which, presumably, the latter wished to force upon him some unwelcome promises.¹ Such, in a memory distorted with passion and consumed by egotism, was the aspect assumed by a commonplace social occasion. J. Stanley-Brown, Garfield's secretary, adds his emphatic testimony as follows: "I was present dur-

¹ Conkling, *Life of Roscoe Conkling*, p. 624.

ing the entire period of the meeting and there was never a moment when the Conkling group were closeted with the General nor was there ever presented any opportunity for such a bargain. It was a deliberate lie." As for the story of Garfield's greeting Conkling, he added, "I was on that carriage, came with the visitors and was present every moment of their stay. No such incident occurred."¹

The campaign now progressed with constantly increasing vigor and with rising Republican hopes. Garfield's journal records the unending stream of callers, deputations and politicians which descended upon Mentor from east, west and south. On September 6 and 7 there was a conference with C. I. Filley of St. Louis, Senator Plumb of Kansas, Governor Foster of Ohio and Amos Townsend of Cleveland. "Spent several hours," he records, "with Filley in carefully going over the situation in Indiana. Subject resumed when Senator Plumb arrived and special points discussed with Governor and Townsend after their arrival." "Sept. 7. F. W. Phillips came by evening train. The situation in Indiana was fully discussed. Drafted a plan of appointments for Blaine." "Sept. 8. Honorable J. Hubbell and wife of Michigan came at ten and remained until two. He is *en route* to New York to attend the meeting of the National Executive Committee." "Sept. 19. G. A. Baker reported the situation in Ohio and E. W. Stoughton reported from Indiana. Both spent the night with us." "Sept. 23 Whitelaw Reid was at Mentor. Went quite fully over the situation of the campaign and made some suggestion in reference to its drift and outlook." Four days later, September 27, Senator Allison, ex-Senator Simon Cameron, L. P. Morton and others dropped in. "Had a full conversation on the political situation in Indiana. Allison and Morton spent the night with us and the situation of the campaign was quite fully discussed." When these gentlemen returned to New York, Garfield wrote to Dorsey (September 29): "You will hear from them in time. Don't relax any grip anywhere. There are touches of panicky talk in various quarters which arise naturally from the anxiety and earnestness of a close contest. I rely greatly upon your calm

¹ Letter of 1924.

equipoise which has shown itself so often and so well hitherto. I know how you are hurried, but I hope you will find time to write me a few words on the outlook." On October 4 Garfield wrote: "I drove to the Painesville station and met Blaine, rode with him to the Mentor station, whence he came home with us and spent the night. Had a long and interesting conversation on the general situation. He believes that Grant and his associates are specially busy in running the campaign of 1884. This, it seems to me, is rather too far in advance to lay plans." The contrast between these full conversations and the purely formal relations with Conkling when passing through, is significant.

But more numerous than politicians were Garfield's personal friends and acquaintances, who, from the day after the nomination, began to descend upon him to claim his hospitality. From the time his journal resumed in July, 1880, up to the end of the campaign, there is revealed a steady stream of callers. Out from his past, from his childhood and school days, from his district neighborhood, from the army, from every imaginable field of his life came individuals. Some entries from the journal will serve to illustrate. August 11, "Mr. S. S. Coffin of Iowa came today. He was a teacher at Chester when C. and I were there and has retained much of his freshness and vivacity. He is anxious about my smoking and labors with me like a missionary." On August 17 came Don Pardee and Captain Henry of the forty-second. August 22, "General Eldridge of Chicago (my college classmate)." September 4, "A. G. Riddle of Ashtabula spent the afternoon and night." September 11, "My old Chester classmate Israel B. Curtis and his wife called. In the evening Lieutenant Harber came." September 25, "President Chadbourne of Williams College came from Painesville." September 30, "Harrison Garfield and wife of Lee, Massachusetts came and spent the afternoon. Isaac Errett, Doctor Robinson and wife, members of the 'Quintinkle' took supper with us and spent the evening." The next day, "At noon Uncle Thomas Garfield, Cousin Harriet Fisher and her daughter came to visit us. In the afternoon I went with uncle over the farm." The next day, John Q. Smith, his old colleague in

the Ohio Senate turned up. October 8, "Mr. W. C. Howells and his daughter from Montreal came to see us." He ran over the full roster of his army of friends from childhood days onward.

On October 12 came the Indiana and Ohio elections, the result of which, in Garfield's opinion, would practically settle the outcome. His journal at this point is interesting as showing the tension in his mind and how, at this crisis in his career, he went back for refuge to the half-forgotten days of childhood. October 9, "A busy day in sending final messages and directions to various parts of the field, preparatory to the battle of Tuesday next. Received from Indiana the final report which will test the thoroughness and faithfulness of our organization." On Sunday, October 10, he went with his wife and daughter to Solon, visited his two sisters and "in the evening drove to Orange and spent the night at Cousin Henry Boynton's by the old birth-place. Walked out under the cold starlight and tried to recall the old sensations of boyhood. Here I first learned the constellations and their places in the heavens. It is my Greenwich where all the world is exactly in its right place." October 11, "Went with C., Cousin Henry and his wife into Mother's old orchard and gathered some apples from the trees which my father planted. At a quarter before nine we started along the road leading toward Bentleyville, on which I do not remember to have traveled for more than thirty-five years. I drove slowly, for every spot was crowded with childhood memories, by the old places of Smith, Frazer, Willey, Rathbone, Bentley. All gone, nearly all dead. It was a perfect autumn day and the foliage was just at the point of perfect coloring."

Then came the end of suspense, for by the morning of October 13 victory was certain. "Our plurality in Ohio," records the journal, "will be about 20,000. By noon the magnitude of the victory had increased. By night it was certain that we had carried Indiana by over five thousand, had gained two Congressmen and probably captured the legislature." October 14. "Telegrams and letters from all sides. The effect in Indiana and Ohio has been overwhelm-

ing." October 15, "Letters and telegrams of congratulation are pouring in so rapidly that I am compelled to abandon the purpose of answering them except a few of the most important." Garfield's letters show that, to his mind, the outcome of the national election was settled. To Jewell he wrote (October 15): "The elections on Tuesday last greatly simplified the conditions of the contest. They have brought fresh and valuable reinforcements into the field, but they have also brought us some of the dangers that always attend success, especially that arising from over-confidence. The center of the fight now shifts to New York and its two adjacent states upon which our chief efforts must be directed. Let me know directly or through the Major [Swaim] what western men you need as speakers and you shall have all we can give. While I say this I do not forget that Indiana must still be watched with great vigilance. Please let me know especially the situation on the Pacific coast. My advices indicate close work. Now it seems to me is the time to call upon the business men of the country for liberal contributions to meet the multiplying wants of the next three weeks."

To Dorsey, on the same day, he said: "You and your associates must continue the Indiana work to final victory but I want you also while in New York to look over the other contested points of the field, and let me know the situation as it appears to you. For the Pacific coast, Mackey should help us to prevent the influence of his bonanza associates from being thrown against us. Our work in Indiana has vindicated itself and silenced all cavillers."

During the month of October the principal feature of life at the Mentor house, apart from the mountainous masses of letters and telegrams, was the constant arrival of deputations. These had begun to appear sporadically in September. The first considerable one, which came solely to see the candidate and assure him of support, was on September 4, "a company of ninety-five ladies and gentlemen from Indiana arrived by special train, having walked to the house from the railroad by way of the lane. Their chairman made a handsome address to which I responded in a short speech,

getting in a few sentences in praise of resumption." On September 30 came the Fisk Jubilee singers. October 8, "The Young Men's First Voters Garfield and Arthur Club of Cleveland, four hundred in all, came by special train." After the October elections the frequency increased. On October 15 "a thousand business men of Cleveland came on a special train of thirteen cars. Mr. Ely delivered an address to which I replied in a short speech." It was apparent that, without planning to do so, Garfield was being drawn into what later came to be recognized as a "front-porch" campaign, in which the candidate does not technically "take the stump" but speaks in answer to the visiting delegations of supporters. In this case Garfield, by exerting his utmost ingenuity, persisted in refraining from uttering any actual campaign speeches, adhering steadily to his ideal of dignified impersonal sentiments. On October 18 "Seven cars loaded with Germans, came from Cleveland. Mr. Kaufman, Editor of the 'Anzeiger,' delivered the address in German. The translation had been sent to me in advance and I replied to its leading points, closing with a brief quotation in German from a poem of 'Novalis.'" The next day came "five hundred members of the Lincoln Club of Indianapolis. They wore linen dusters and three cornered straw hats." On the twenty-sixth came three hundred people from Warren; on the twenty-seventh, nine hundred ladies of Cleveland. On the twenty-eighth "shortly after noon a special train brought two hundred people from Portage county. Judge Luther Day made the address, a very touching and beautiful one. I responded and asked the whole party into the house. There were so many old neighbors and friends that C. had her first cry in public while receiving them."

Toward the end the numbers increased. On October 30 came three hundred and twenty-nine citizens of Youngstown, followed by three hundred from West Salem, and "one hundred Iron Men from Cleveland." Still later in the same day "about fifteen hundred members of clubs came from all parts of Lake county and from several towns of Ashtabula, Geauga and Cuyahoga. Shortly after noon, it began to rain, and the storm grew in violence into the night. But the clubs,

cavalry and foot, paraded in the field south of the road, until after dark."

Upon these "front-porch" addresses Blaine made an interesting comment. "One aspect of Garfield's candidacy was unprecedented. Never before in the history of partisan contests in this country, had a successful Presidential candidate spoken freely on passing events and current issues. To attempt anything of the kind seemed novel, rash and even desperate." After referring to the unfortunate outcome of Scott's and Greeley's campaign speaking he continued: "Unmindful of these warnings, Garfield spoke to large crowds as he journeyed to and from New York in August, to a great multitude in that city, to delegations and deputations of every kind that called at Mentor during the summer and autumn. With innumerable critics, watchful and eager to catch a phrase that might be turned into ridicule or odium, or a sentence that might be distorted to his own or the party's injury, Garfield did not halt nor trip in any one of his seventy speeches. This seems all the more remarkable when it is remembered that he did not write what he said, and yet spoke with such logical consecutiveness of thought and such admirable precision of phrase as to defy the accident of misreport and the malignity of misrepresentation."¹

But a more serious matter than responding to campaign clubs arose to absorb the candidate's attention, for on October 20 he was informed of the existence of a letter purporting to be by him, in which the admission of Chinese laborers was advocated. This was the "Morey letter," one of the most famous campaign forgeries in United States history. Garfield's journal reports the episode as follows: "Oct. 20. During the day, I received a telegram from Simonton, Agent of the Associated Press and one of the proprietors of a newspaper in San Francisco, asking if a letter purporting to be written by me on the Chinese question was genuine. I answered requesting that a copy be sent me which later in the day Simonton did by wire. I answered him that it was a forgery that I had written no such letter. It is evidently the purpose of the Democrats in their desperation to seek

¹ "Eulogy," p. 91.

by this means to take the Pacific Coast from us at the coming election."

Two days later came a telegram from James Gordon Bennett, "saying that Abram S. Hewitt had said that he had seen the original Morey letter and believed the letter to be genuine. Bennet reports great excitement in New York and desires me to answer. Made no answer not wishing to be a newspaper correspondent in my own behalf."¹ Later in the day Rose was sent to Washington to search the letter files to see if there were any letter in any way resembling the forgery. Garfield also telegraphed to Jewell authorizing him to denounce the letter as a forgery but not to publish the telegram. "I did this," he wrote, "because I still hope to get through the campaign without appearing in my own defense against any of the charges." Here were the old pride and sensitiveness once more, which throughout his career had led him to suffer slander in silence, sometimes to the end, sometimes until his friends compelled him, as in the salary grab case, to speak for himself. The next day he saw a facsimile of the Morey letter. "It relieved my mind," he wrote, "of the only oppression I had, the fear that there might have been a letter from Morey and that Nichol might have answered it without my seeing the letter or answer. The facsimile settled all that. It is not in the handwriting of any person I know but is a manifestly bungling attempt to copy my hand and signature."

Jewell telegraphed him (October 23) that "the city was ablaze with excitement" and he must deny the forgery over his own signature. "I therefore telegraphed him authorizing him to print my telegram of the night before. I do this with regret, for I hoped to answer all my accusers by silence." Garfield wrote also to Reid in the same vein. "It is all a lie from beginning to end." On October 24 Garfield's letter of October 23 to Jewell, was photographically reproduced as sent to the press. It ran as follows: "In my dispatches of yesterday and this evening (which are also sent you by mail) I have denounced the Morey letter as a base forgery.

¹ Journal, October 22.

Its stupid and brutal sentiments I never expressed nor entertained. The lithographic copy shows a very clumsy attempt to imitate my penmanship and signature. Any one who is familiar with my handwriting will instantly see that the letter is spurious." Then followed a vigorous counterattack in the Republican press, backed up by Garfield's deposition under oath that the letter was a forgery. Arrests were made and every effort put forth to trace the letter to the Democratic National Committee.

In this case, as in earlier ones, Garfield's reluctance to make a personal statement simply played into the hands of his enemies, who promptly claimed that his denial was under compulsion. "It is pertinent to ask," said the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, "if the Morey letter is a stupid forgery, why General Garfield did not so stamp it without the solicitation of the party managers. He maintained a dogged silence until he was forced by the party leaders to make a disavowal, and the fact that he did not make this emphatic disavowal of his own free will is manifest." *Truth*, the paper publishing the letter, asked flatly, "If a man will swear to a falsehood for \$329, will he not tell a lie for the Presidency?"

Under this excitement the Republican managers suffered a temporary loss of courage. "New is alarmed about Indiana," wrote Garfield to Reid, "I can hardly think he has good ground for it." Garfield was not shaken. "It may lose us the Pacific states," he entered in the journal (October 23), "and possibly some others, but I do not think it can turn the current that now sweeps so strongly in my favor." Nevertheless, in inviting Austin to be with him on election night he added, "I have not time to say more except that you must take your chances of receiving bad news."

The last two days before the election, October 30 and November 1, were quiet. Garfield's journal reports "A lull along the whole line of battle," and he busied himself with farm details, noting that "the men are gathering and hauling beets," and, on election day itself, that he "arranged for ploughing and seeding garden east of house and starting a new one in rear of engine house." Finally "at six, returns began to come in. Judd and Jeffers taking dispatches. Some

reporters and friends from Cleveland came. Later in the evening many neighbors came in. By eleven P.M. it became evident that we had carried New York. At twelve we gave supper to about twenty-five friends. At three A.M. we closed the office, secure in all the Northern states except New Jersey and the Pacific States which are yet in doubt." The next day the triumph foreshadowed in October was consummated. "We appear to have lost New Jersey," he wrote, "and Nevada by a small margin, due I think to the influence of the forgery, and possibly California is against us. It is very close. We have at least 212 electoral votes, a small majority in the House and the Senate nearly or quite a tie." In writing to Governor Foster on November 8, formally resigning from the House of Representatives, Garfield said: "Great as our victory was, I believed the forged letter cost us all the Northern states which we lost. I do not intend to let up on the rascals until they are punished to the full extent of the law."

There now descended an avalanche of congratulatory letters, "two or three thousand" in two days, and hundreds of telegrams, while, as the hard-pressed man and his staff struggled to answer the most important, they were interrupted by constant callers: President Fairchild and seventy students of Oberlin College; President and Mrs. Hayes; Father Thorpe of the Catholic Cathedral, who presented a cane which had been voted to him at a fair; the Republican State Central Committee. And throughout the country the Republican newspapers and Democratic alike devoted their attention to discussing the causes for the outcome.

Outside of a few writers representing the Conkling element in New York, who ascribe the Republican victory entirely to the "Stalwart" leader's speeches in New York, Ohio and Indiana, it is the consensus of opinion that Garfield's victory was to a large degree a personal triumph for him. Ever since 1874 the Republican party had been in a minority in the House and since 1878 in the Senate also. The election of 1876 was saved for Hayes only by the Electoral Commission and the counting of the carpet-bag votes in Louisiana, Florida and South Carolina. It was necessary

for the Republicans to fight an uphill battle and in this the presence of a man like Garfield as candidate was an assistance. The attacks on his character seem to have had no perceptible effect on the vote, and the circulation of his speeches and the familiarizing of the people with his rise from poverty to success won him sympathy, while his dignified personal bearing during the campaign attracted the favor of thousands whose attitude in politics is chiefly personal.

As for Garfield himself, he showed, after the first elation of victory, more depression than anything else over the election. In part, no doubt, this was the natural reaction of mood, after a period of excitement and strain; but in the main it represented his sober realization of what the election meant for him. "I believe," he wrote (November 8), "all my friends are more gratified with the personal part of my triumph than I am, and although I am proud of the noble support I have received and the vindication it gives me against my assailants, yet there is a tone of sadness running through this triumph which I can hardly explain." In the annual letter to Hinsdale he said (January 5, 1881): "The year has been full of surprise and has brought more sadness than joy. I am conscious of two things; first that I have never had and do not think I shall ever have the Presidential fever, Second, that I am not elated over the election. On the contrary, while appreciating the honor and the opportunities, I feel keenly the loss of liberty which accompanies it, and especially that it will in a great measure stop my growth. I have no doubt you are right when you say I shall feel better about it by and by." In such highly characteristic words did the victorious candidate glance backward and then forward.

CHAPTER XXVII
CABINET-MAKING

1880-1881

GARFIELD had a definite idea of what ought to be done in the period intervening between his election and his inauguration. He wished it to be a time of observation, reflection and preparation for the assumption of his duties. "I insist," he wrote Hinsdale (November 17), "that I have a right to be silent for the next two or three months and take observations. Lincoln said in his homely way that he wanted 'to take a bath in public opinion.' I think I have a right to take a bath before I do much talking." On the surface, there seemed to be no reason why he could not do this. He was on the best of terms with Hayes and his cabinet, and did not need to worry about their doings. Furthermore, no critical or alarming questions were pending other than those that come up in the ordinary course of foreign and domestic affairs and it ought to have been possible for him to prepare himself thoroughly in advance for everything that might confront him on taking office.

Unfortunately for Garfield, it was also necessary for him to select a cabinet during these months and in this process he was bound to encounter the same unsettled question which had existed ever since the nominating convention, namely, the conciliation of the different elements in the party. That he should select a corps of departmental heads on any other basis than a political one, in which the representation of geographical areas, of personal groups, of state factions, should all be considered, was out of the question. Nobody for a moment dreamed of any other method. At the heart of the situation stood the one unavoidable necessity of placating or satisfying the political desires of the New York "Stalwarts," and, since it was certain that whatever he did to please any

faction would offend one or more other elements, it was inevitable that any step taken to satisfy Conkling would alienate some of the very men whom Garfield most wished to retain as his friends and supporters.

In addition, the task would be concerned almost entirely with the sort of thing which Garfield most disliked and with which he was generally supposed to be least well-fitted to deal, that is, questions involving personalities and the relative merits of men. Friends and enemies alike feared that, owing to his personal kindness and facility of temper, he would yield to all sorts of pressure and allow himself to be "run" by dominating individuals. It seems to have been taken for granted that whoever was selected for the cabinet would probably be able to direct Garfield's actions for his own benefit and to the detriment of rivals.

It is interesting to see how seriously such a man as John Hay was concerned over this supposed "weakness" of Garfield. As early as October 18, after the Indiana election had presaged victory, he had sent Garfield this whimsical warning letter. "Even at the risk of seeming presumptuous, I will rid myself of this word which has positively haunted me for a week. Beware of your own generosity! On the second of November, *you* are to be made our President. You do not need the whispered admonition of the ancient monarchs, 'Remember thou art mortal.' It will pay you to keep a cheap friend to drone continually in your ear, 'It was *you* who were nominated at Chicago and elected by the people.'" After the election, when the newspapers of the country began constructing cabinets and discussing offices with their usual freedom, Hay became seriously alarmed lest the "Stalwarts" should actually secure too great recognition. He wrote to Reid¹ in November: "If you go to Mentor, give our great and good friend all the wisdom you have got on the cabinet question. He will need it. Every despatch I have seen from Washington, Columbus, or Cleveland on that subject is not only unutterably base and grovelling in spirit, but portentous of disaster if certain influences get control."

To quiet this anxiety there came little or nothing from

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 40.

Garfield. From the beginning to the end of the long period of cabinet-making he maintained an obstinate silence so far as any public utterances were concerned. To individuals he talked, but with a caution hitherto considered foreign to his nature. This silence he never broke, and the result is that about the making of his cabinet there has always hung a cloud of uncertainty and a haze of conjecture. Various individuals have told of their share in the process, a few letters have been published and many conclusions have been drawn, but as to what Garfield actually did, evidence has been lacking. It will be the aim of the present chapter to analyze, without undue detail, the tangled history of the months of negotiations which, as will shortly appear, were in reality a prolonged diplomatic game between Garfield and Conkling, ending with the definite success of the former; a game which Garfield played practically singlehanded, getting information and assistance from many sources but making every important decision himself.

The first point to settle was whether the Grant men intended to remain a separate group within the party, and here, at the start, Garfield was gratified by receiving spontaneous assurances of support from two of the leading figures. On November 16, at Mentor, he reported a visit from Joseph Medill, of the *Chicago Tribune*, who spoke authoritatively of Logan's attitude. "He says he does not want and would not accept a place in the cabinet. He does not think the '306' people wish to be a faction but wish to be treated like other staunch Republicans." "To this, I replied," wrote Garfield, "that I wanted all Republicans, including the '306,' to consider themselves in full fellowship." A week later, on his way to Washington, Garfield received, at Harrisburg similar assurances from Don Cameron, the boss of Pennsylvania. "Had a frank conversation with him," he wrote, "on the political situation. I commenced it by asking him to tell me how much '306' means. He thinks it will not be maintained as a separate faction within the party, certainly not if a proper career is afforded to General Grant." This was a satisfactory beginning, so far as it went.

The Washington visit lasted only a few days, nominally during the dismantling of the I Street house, but in this brief period Garfield had set in motion trains of action which were to have momentous consequences. His first step, on November 27, was to send for L. P. Morton, who at his request had acted as campaign treasurer, undoubtedly intending to offer him, as a representative of the New York "Stalwarts," some position in the administration in recognition of his services. To his dismay and annoyance, he found that Morton expected to be given a specific place, claiming that it had been virtually promised. "Conference with L. P. Morton," he recorded in his notebook, "whom I find under misapprehension that Secretary of Treasury is promised to New York. This was not my understanding and seems wholly inadmissible. It would be a congestion of financial power at the money centre and would create jealousy at the West." The next day he had another conference and left it with the following notification to Morton, and, through him, to the New York group. "I will not tolerate nor act upon any understanding that anything has been pledged to any party, state or person."

It is necessary to pause at this point and consider the evidence as to this "pledge" on account of the important part played by it in the ensuing months. According to Platt's *Autobiography*, it was a direct offer made by Garfield on August 5. "Mr. Morton did not propose to undertake the labor necessary to obtain the large amount of money necessary for such a national canvass without knowing squarely what his future status would be. It was settled that, if Mr. Morton would undertake and perform the important work, he would have the option of receiving, if Mr. Garfield were elected, the Secretaryship of the Treasury, the ministership to England or would be made the principal agent of the government for funding the bonded debt."¹

Such language is precise, but, like so many assertions in Platt's book, it is proved false by the contemporary evidence. In the first place, Dorsey, on December 16, 1880, carefully

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 132.

sent to Garfield the New York version, as follows: "that the persons whom the General [*i.e.*, Garfield] met in my room at the Fifth Avenue Hotel last summer all agree that he (the General) stated several times during the conversation that the Secretaryship of the Treasury properly belonged to the state of New York as the great commercial center of the country, and that, if four names of good respectable men representing the dominant wing of the Republican party were presented and among them Mr. Morton, he would select from this number a person to serve as Secretary of the Treasury." More significant still, when Morton himself made a formal claim in writing he rested it not upon any promise made to him in person, but upon "the reports of conversations with you by Senators Plumb, Dorsey, Cameron, and others that I could have the Secretaryship of the Treasury" (January 17, 1881). This makes it clear that not Morton himself but the group of "Stalwart" leaders was responsible for the claim.

It is inconceivable, of course, that Garfield should actually have made any such promise. He went to New York with the express purpose to make no pledge and congratulated himself on returning to Ohio with "no trades, no shackles." He never for an instant admitted making any offer of any kind to Morton. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Plumb, Dorsey and the others really believed that Garfield had said something constituting a promise, something on which Morton could base a strong claim. Under such circumstances as existed at the New York meeting, "misunderstandings" of this kind are frequent. It is the common experience of every executive, every leader who tries to placate those who desire something specific, that precise meanings are read into the most general and noncommittal statements. There is no need to impute conscious mendacity or deception. It is the universal experience. It is not necessary to assume even carelessness on Garfield's part.

Having discovered this difficulty with the New Yorkers, Garfield turned next to the imperative necessity of "taking care" of Blaine, whose supporters had furnished most of the votes that had nominated him at Chicago and who had, in

addition, the strongest claims to consideration as a party congressional leader, besides being a personal friend. The journal reports (November 27): "Went to Blaine's house and took an early breakfast with him alone. I said 'Blaine, I have not made a single final decision in reference to my cabinet and shall not until February. But let us talk personally. If I should ask you to take a place in the cabinet, what would be your probable response, and before you answer, please tell me whether you are, or will be, a candidate for the presidency in 1884. I ask this because I do not purpose to allow myself nor anyone else to use the next four years as the camping-ground for fighting the next presidential battle.' He replied that he would not again seek a nomination. Indeed, he thought he could not get it by seeking, that if he ever should be nominated, it would be because it came to him unsought. He then asked me if I really wanted him in my cabinet. I answered that if I should find it possible to make a cast of a cabinet in which he would be a harmonious factor, it would be personally very agreeable to have him with me. But, as I would make no final decisions until February, we could canvass the subject freely in the meantime.

"At first, he spoke as though he could not exchange his place in the senate for one in the cabinet. I pointed out the career which executive work offered and told him I thought it would be better for his fame and for the health of his party in Maine if he would resign the leadership for a time; that the back-set in his state was, in part, due to a rebellion against his rule, and he would be better liked if he withdrew his hand from the helm for a time. We both agreed that only the Treasury or State Departments would be desirable for him. Nothing was concluded except an agreement for a free correspondence on the subject."

Going next to Sherman, Garfield found him intent upon securing the vacant Senatorship from Ohio, for which he had already announced his candidacy on November 10. The diary says: "Satisfactory talk with Sherman. Asked him if he would feel wholly cordial if he were not retained. Replied affirmatively and, I think, cordially." Sherman wrote in his

*Recollections.*¹ "Garfield informed me that he had tendered that office [State Department] to Blaine and that it was accepted. He said that Blaine thought it would not be politic to continue me as Secretary of the Treasury as it would be regarded as an unfriendly discrimination by other members of Hayes's cabinet. I promptly replied that I agreed with the opinion of Blaine and was a candidate for the Senate." Relying on this, Rhodes comments:² "Of course, this was a subterfuge. It was entirely apparent that a choice must be made between Blaine and Sherman and there is no reason to believe that Garfield hesitated for a moment." Sherman was in error, of course, in saying that Blaine had accepted the State Department—that he did not do for three weeks. Rhodes's guess that it was Blaine who caused Garfield to exclude Sherman at this time is further negatived by the fact that on January 7 and January 15 Blaine wrote long letters arguing that very point, as if it were a perfectly new one. As a matter of fact, Garfield never at any time considered Sherman for the Treasury and was under no necessity of choosing.

With Hayes, also, he had "a long interview on retirements and appointments, also on the personnel of the persons employed at the White House." In short, when Garfield terminated his five days' stay at Washington, he could feel that the situation was beginning to shape itself with some distinctness. But already the great burdens under which the President of the United States had then, and has still, to struggle, had begun to descend upon him. He was subjected to an unremitting series of social invitations and celebrations, and this in spite of the fact that one main purpose of the visit to Washington was to dismantle the house on I Street. The morning after their arrival, as they started to pack things (November 24), "a great crowd of callers began. . . . The rush was so great that I escaped it by driving out." At every moment when he and his wife were not out calling or dining, the pressure continued; at and after church, in the early forenoon, in the late evening. Most

¹ Vol. II, p. 802.

² *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 140.

of them came simply to see the President-elect, but among them came the office-seekers and the politicians. "November 26. Callers commenced again early. Came in crowds, the majority of all seeking to impress me with some special views of the political situation, and what ought to be done for the future."

They took meals with the Rockwells, with Ingersoll, at Secretary Sherman's, at General Schencks's, at Senator Edmunds's, at Morton's, at Evarts's, at the President's, each time in a large company. When Garfield left he was thoroughly tired and rather depressed. "The trip to Washington has been very exhausting," he wrote. "We have partially dismantled the house. I did not know how strongly I had become attached to the little Washington home. I have probably taken my final leave of it as a home. I cannot expect as much happiness in any other house in Washington." In fact, this note of sadness runs through most of Garfield's reflections of these months. In his journal, for instance, under December 31, he wrote, "I close the year with a sad conviction that I am bidding good-bye to private life and to a long series of happy years which I fear terminate in 1880."

It was in this spirit of grim performance of duty, without a trace of exultation, that Garfield resumed his intricate political negotiations after his return to Mentor, where he remained henceforward until time to go to Washington for his inauguration. He began with one fixed point, the offer of the State Department to Blaine; but as to every other cabinet position his mind was open, and he went at the task in much the same manner as though he were preparing a speech; he sought for all the pertinent facts, he gathered all the expert opinions, he studied and compared them and he arrived at conclusions, at first tentative, then definite. This meant that he had to read scores of letters of advice and suggestion from persons whom he had requested to write and from dozens of volunteer advisers, and had to have interviews with men of every sort of political belief and personal bias. He had to balance diametrically opposed opinions and statements of facts; he had to discount all sorts of extravagant claims and denunciations; he had to do, in short, the

very thing for which many of his colleagues regarded him as largely unfitted. What the diary and the letter files show is that Garfield, while keeping that open mind and tentative manner that impressed many men as vacillating and uncertain, was coolly carrying on his own reflections and coming to his own conclusions. He accepted information freely but he made each decision. He did it rapidly, moreover, and but for one persistent difficulty he would have had his cabinet virtually selected by the middle of January, as the following analysis will make plain.

In the first place, as to Blaine; that statesman's early hesitation quickly yielded and on December 20 he wrote Garfield a warmly personal letter, accepting the offer of the State Department, expressly laying aside his own ambitions and promising hearty and loyal support. "In accepting this important post," he wrote, "I shall give all that I am and all that I can hope to be freely and joyfully to your service. You need no pledge of my loyalty both in heart and in act. . . . However I might admire you as a statesman, I could not enter your cabinet if I did not believe in you as a man and love you as a friend." On the day he received this, Garfield wrote in the journal (December 23), "Important letter from Blaine today, which may have marked influence on his future and mine." He acknowledged it warmly. "Our long and eventful service together," he wrote (December 23), "and our friendship, never for a moment interrupted but tested in so many ways, gives assurance that we can happily unite in working out the important problems which confront us."

Thus the first step was taken. The most brilliant figure in the Republican party, the man who, in spite of Garfield's disapproval of his political methods, had won his affection by his personal charm was to be the first figure in the new administration. Garfield knew exactly what he was doing in making this offer, which, although absolutely necessary on personal and political grounds, was certain to create difficulties. On December 12 he reflected in the journal: "On many accounts, he would be a brilliant Secretary of State. Other adjustments might be more difficult." After his acceptance,

he wrote in a notebook, "Blaine. *For*—(1) Nearly the whole Republican West; (2) Many Southern leaders, *i.e.*, Lamar. *Against*—(1) Conkling; (2) Grant, probably; (3) Majority of Massachusetts; (4) Independents; (5) Those who think him too restless and ambitious." Garfield acted with his eyes open.

Simultaneously Garfield began to try to come to an understanding with the New York group in spite of the unsurmountable obstacle in the path created by the claim put forth by Morton. He presently became aware that it was the intention of Conkling and his supporters to accept nothing but the appointment of Morton to the Treasury Department. Formal notice was served on December 13. "At seven p.m., Governor Cornell, Honorable Richard Crowley and a Mr. Payn of New York . . . came from Senator Conkling and Mr. Morton to urge the appointment of the latter to the Secretaryship of the Treasury. They said that Morton had understood from me in August that that was one of several places he could expect to have and the fact of the supposed permission to choose had probably lost him the Senatorship. I answered that I did not give him the option and by no implication tendered him the Treasury; that he is ineligible by statute for the place and that it would be most unwise in a party sense to give the place to New York City. Furthermore, I would not interfere pending the senatorial election but would postpone the choice of a cabinet until after the senatorships were decided. They left at ten p.m., evidently disappointed. Crowley said Conkling hoped to sustain my administration and give me a second term. I answered I would not permit this four years to be used to secure the next for anybody."

The visit of this delegation having failed, Conkling made a renewed offer through Dorsey, who had been at Mentor at the time of the visit. Garfield had gained a considerable respect for Dorsey's shrewdness and vigor during the campaign and he now wrote in his journal on December 14: "He is a man of great ability and with strong and decisive views of the merits of men. He thinks the New York proposition altogether inadmissible." Since Dorsey was on the best of

terms with Conkling, he formed, at the moment, an excellent intermediary in the indirect negotiations which the New York "boss" preferred. Writing on December 16, he sent Garfield a very long, detailed account of an interview with Conkling, evidently intended as a political "diplomatic note," which deserves quotation. After stating the belief of the New Yorkers that Garfield had offered the Treasury to Morton, Dorsey quoted Conkling as saying "that above all he desired to support the General's administration as he had supported General Grant's and with an impressiveness for which he is distinguished, he said, 'There are two ways of dealing with your peers to secure their coöperation and friendship, one is to crush them out and the other is to consolidate them. I am not a rival of Garfield's, Grant is not a rival of Garfield's. I desire to be his friend and am more than anxious to stand by him, not halting or half-hearted but as I stand by men. No man can create a rival of Garfield four years hence except Garfield himself. If he has one, he alone is responsible for it.' I cannot convey to you the manner, earnestness and power with which this expression was made. It was intense in the highest degree.

"In the conversation which continued, he said that, if, upon further reflection, the General thought it unwise to give New York the Treasury, he wished he would say so distinctly so that there would be no mistake about it and then they would know better what to do. He hoped that there might be some other place in the cabinet arranged so as to save the self-respect of the man who believed that he had been offered the position of Secretary of the Treasury and, at the same time, consolidate the party in New York. He stated to me with great force and clearness that he never knew a Republican of real capacity to go far wrong and that when we elected as a Republican a man of brains, he always stood squarely by the party and that he recognized Garfield as one of the ablest men the country had produced, and, setting aside any question of his training and his natural and honest Republicanism, his capacity alone would force him into the front rank. I must confess," concluded Dorsey, "that I was a good deal surprised at Mr. Conk-

ling by his manner as well as by what he said. I think he sees as clearly as any one can that he is out of the race, that General Grant is out, that Mr. Blaine is worse than out, and he is anxious to be in with those who are not out."

Garfield's comment upon this letter in his journal for December 19, shows again that what he was looking for, all the time, were signs of good feeling. He simply could not grasp the impossibility of Conkling's being swayed by impulses similar to his own. "Important letter from New York indicating that Mr. Conkling is really desirous of sustaining my administration. It ought to be true. I will try to make it so without surrendering the proper control of any function I should hold." The next day he thought he saw an opportunity to do the very thing Conkling suggested and find another place in the cabinet for Morton, to "save his self-respect." A letter from Hayes had come, saying that if Garfield had a man to suggest for Secretary of the Navy, he, Hayes, would be glad to appoint him now to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of the incumbent, R. W. Thompson. Garfield instantly wrote to Dorsey, suggesting that this might "take care of Morton" and asking him to find out. No definite news coming from him, Garfield wrote directly to Hayes, on January 5, describing the effort to push Morton for the Treasury and suggesting him for the Navy Department, but Hayes replied (January 8) that this scheme had failed, and he had had to appoint a temporary occupant. "It was well understood that I would have named him for the place. He may yet think better of it." A Washington dispatch to the New York *Tribune*, January 1, reported that Hayes had made the offer, but that Morton declined, saying that the Treasury was the only office he would take.

By this time the rumor of Blaine's acceptance was leaking out. It was announced in New York and Chicago papers as early as December 28 and 29, and seemed to be generally believed by the first week in January. At the same time an episode occurred in New York which served to stir the smouldering dissatisfaction of the "Stalwarts" into flame. Garfield had told Cornell, Crowley and Payn on December 13 that

he would not interfere in the New York election, but the New York men who were Garfield's friends and Conkling's enemies organized a contest in the legislature with the avowed purpose of preventing the election of a "Stalwart" senator. Holding the balance between Democrats and Conkling men, they were in a position to use their power.

In arranging this plan, Blaine, wholly on his own motion, took an active part. C. M. Depew, who was the candidate of the Independents, said,¹ "Blaine, representing Garfield, came to New York and asked me to enter the contest for the purpose of securing the election of a senator who would support the administration." This was on December 30. At the same time Blaine took the responsibility of writing an editorial for the New York *Tribune*, using the words "by authority,"—interpreted as meaning, by Garfield's authority,—which was published on January 3. It dealt with the subject of federal appointments to office in New York State and assumed to declare the policy of the incoming administration. But, before quoting it, the status of public feeling on that delicate subject should be reviewed.

Immediately after the election, newspapers representing the Conkling wing began claiming that, as a result of the "Treaty of Mentor," Conkling was to be allowed to control all patronage in the State of New York, and that the appointment of a Conkling man to the Treasury Department, with its important offices, was part of the arrangement. This was vigorously combated by writers in other newspapers, who denied that there was any "Treaty of Mentor" at all. Press gossip ranged at will over the field. Back of it all lay the fundamental fact that the Conkling element was in deadly earnest in desiring the control of the New York offices and dreaded nothing more than the possible danger to their position from the presence of Blaine in the cabinet. Now, on January 3, the *Tribune* editorial "by authority" stated positively that the President-elect was taking no part in the senatorial election, but went on to add these significant words: "The incoming administration will see to it that

¹ Alexander, *History of the State of New York*, Vol. III, p. 466.

the men from New York and from the other states, who had the courage at Chicago to obey the wishes of their districts in the balloting for president and who thus finally voted for Garfield, shall not lose by it. . . . The administration of President Garfield is to be an administration for the whole Republican party. It will foment no quarrels . . . but it will not permit its friends to be persecuted for their friendship."

In reporting this step to Garfield, Reid, with his usual pungency, warned him of Conkling's intention to insist on all the patronage. "Half his strength at present consists in the belief, which his friends are everywhere inculcating, that he is to control your administration absolutely and that all its patronage will be wielded against the men who dare to oppose him." Then followed a paragraph which later events were to prove prophetic. "There is absolutely no change in his feeling or that of his people towards you. They mean to confront you with the two Senators from the state and demand the entire patronage of the state. In a word, they mean to be your masters and, when you submit, they will like you well enough. But they don't trust you; even their common mode of alluding to you shows their feelings. It is always 'this man, Garfield.'"¹ Although Garfield had not authorized the action of Blaine, he took no exception to the editorial. "The article," he replied to Reid (January 3), "is all right and may do good. Of course, that class of announcements should be used sparingly, but I want the country to know that I will not meddle in the Senatorial contest."

But upon the New Yorkers the Blaine editorial produced an infuriating effect. As Conkling saw it, the essential words were those in which it was announced that recognition would be given to the Independents. "What was the meaning of that article," he asked, "but that the men who had voted faithfully for Grant need expect no quarter from the administration, while the men who had basely violated their pledges by abandoning Grant for Garfield were to be re-

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 47.

warded for their treachery?"¹ This belief was strengthened by the outcome of the senatorial election. It was found that the Independents could not secure the election of Depew, but they finally agreed to transfer their votes to T. C. Platt, an organization man, on condition of express pledges that he would in no way oppose giving the Chicago bolters "their fair share of the patronage" and would vote for the confirmation of their leader, Robertson, even if he were nominated for the cabinet.²

The impression produced upon the New York men was that Blaine, by his acceptance of the Secretaryship of State, had secured control of Garfield's policies and was using his position to exclude them from any recognition. Just at this time J. B. Belford, who had visited Mentor to urge Governor Routt of Colorado for the cabinet, sent to Garfield, at his request, his impressions of the feeling among the New York men. "It is stated by parties who claim to know," he wrote (January 17), "that the cabinet is to be dominated by the Blaine influence, that is, that all the important portfolios are to be given to the active friends of the Maine senator and that Grant, Conkling, and Logan are to be ignored. I have heard this from at least three sources. I think Blaine's friends are indiscreet. A day or two ago, one of them informed me that a certain man would be selected for a certain place because Blaine was going to dominate the administration and see that his friends had the lion's share in the cabinet."

Others besides the New Yorkers expressed discomfort over Blaine's selection. Hayes remarked, as early as January 8: "It is generally supposed that Blaine will be in the State Department. The saving clause in the whole business is *the faith that you will be President.*" Dorsey (January 20), wrote an amusingly frank letter on the subject: "I don't like to see it repeated in the newspapers, day after day, as coming from Mr. Blaine and his friends, that men who voted

¹ J. L. Connery, "Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 150.

² Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 50.

for Grant or for some other man at Chicago are especially selected to be ridden down under the wheels of Mr. Blaine's triumphal car. No President has ever done a wiser thing than you have done in placing Mr. Blaine at the head of your cabinet. And not one ever has done or could do so unwise a thing as to permit him to have a hand in selecting the other members of your cabinet or in any degree to control it after it is selected. . . . The pleasantest satisfaction I have in the midst of all the rumors and newspaper talk is the fact that I believe that General Garfield will be President himself and not Mr. Blaine."

Sherman remarked (January 23): "You know I do not rate Blaine so high as some of his friends do, yet he is a man of good qualities and is a 'power in the land.' If you can only restrain his immense activity and keep him from meddling with other departments, you will have a brilliant secretary. If Blaine talks with you about appointments in other departments, tell him you will confer with the head of that department." In Massachusetts, there was so much opposition to Blaine that Garfield himself had to interpose, through his friend, C. H. Hill, to prevent an open newspaper attack on him by sundry hotheads who hoped to keep him out of the cabinet. Doubtless Garfield expected just this sort of thing and took it philosophically.

Such, by the middle of January, were the consequences of Garfield's offer to Blaine. It becomes a matter of interest to inquire what influence the "magnetic" Maine statesman was actually exerting upon Garfield during the six weeks since he received the offer. One finds, at the start, that Blaine was endeavoring to do exactly what the New Yorkers suspected, namely, to keep any one of them from securing a place in the cabinet. On December 16 he sent Garfield a long and exceedingly bitter analysis of the elements which composed the Republican party, arguing that only among the elements which supported himself and Sherman at the convention would he find loyal advisers. The Grant supporters he stigmatized flatly as "all the desperate bad men of the party" and he characterized the Independents as "re-

formers by profession, the 'Unco Guid,' the worst possible political advisers, upstarts, conceited, foolish, vain, without knowledge of measures, ignorant of men." He concluded that both "Stalwarts" and Independents should be absolutely excluded from the cabinet and the places given solely to his and Sherman's supporters. It is interesting to see how Garfield, in replying, quietly dismissed his belligerent advice and announced his intention of doing exactly what Blaine opposed. He wrote him (December 19) that the Grant element, "though quite inferior as an electing force was, nevertheless, the leading nominating force and hence passes in public estimation for more than it really is. For this reason, among others, it must not be ignored or neglected. In your next letter, please give me your views of the best way to recognize it so as not to be shackled and yet do fair justice. The third group, the Independents, are very impracticable in methods but still they embrace a class of people that ought to be with us and reasonable pains should be taken to retain them. They did good service in the late campaign. Please write me fully your views of persons who come within the range of wise choice." In these two letters lies the germ of all subsequent relations between these two men: the one pugnacious and thinking chiefly of downing the men he disliked, the other aiming steadily at conciliation and justice. In this last policy Blaine gave Garfield no aid whatever. In spite of the request that he suggest names of "Stalwarts" and Independents suitable for cabinet positions, Blaine declined to furnish any. Garfield went ahead in his dealings with Dorsey and Conkling without consulting Blaine and made his offer of the Navy Department to Morton without saying anything to him, nor did he mention to him the effort to push Morton into the Treasury.

Blaine's chief effort was expended in the month following his acceptance of the State Department in urging Allison for the Treasury and disparaging Windom, the other leading candidate. Writing a vigorous letter on December 24 he ruled Windom out as "profoundly and absolutely ignorant of finance except as appropriation bills teach which is nothing and on the wrong side. Any darned fool (mark that

is not d—d) can spend money.” Wilson of Iowa, he said, had been too long out of public life but as to Allison, he was “true, kind, reasonable, fair, honest and good. A splendid man to sail along with smoothly and nicely.”

Considering that Garfield had made his principal record as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, there was something scarcely tactful in Blaine’s remarks. Garfield took no notice of them for over two weeks and then merely pointed out what Blaine had overlooked, that Allison was not certainly “sound.” “How do you think your suggestion would be received by the Protective Tariff men and the very hard money men, in short by Eastern Republicans? Could he put himself in line on these questions so as to leave no serious discord between his views and mine? We must not take any backward steps in finance.” Meanwhile, others had discussed Allison. On December 28 two of Garfield’s Ohio colleagues, Townsend and McKinley, called and approved of him. On December 30 Kirkwood of Iowa—Allison’s colleague in the Senate—thought he might take the place but feared he “might not be approved by Eastern Republicans because of his views on silver.” On January 16 Allison himself called at Mentor and Garfield put him to the test. “I asked him,” he wrote, “what he thought of these four objections to himself for the Treasury. Unsound, 1st, on the silver question; 2d, currency; 3d, tariff; and 4th, not ready for a rugged fight vs. the machine. He acknowledged the force of some of them. Said he was ready to stop the coinage of silver and was not bound on the tariff. Thought the last point not well taken. He will be satisfied if Iowa has Wilson or Kirkwood.”

On the day before this, January 15, Secretary Sherman had discussed his own successor with Garfield, whose report of the conference shows how largely his earlier distrust of Sherman had disappeared. “After supper,” he writes, “spent three hours with Secretary Sherman alone. Went over the political situation fully. His suggestion for Secretary of Treasury was, first, Windom, second, Allison. I asked him what he thought of John J. Knox for the position. It appeared to strike him favorably. We went quite fully

over the ground and he made many valuable suggestions. I am more than ever impressed with his good judgment." The next day, the conversation was resumed. "He is more and more pleased with the suggestion of Knox's name."

The journal and letters show how careful Garfield was to invite coöperation from the "306" men, in spite of Blaine's attitude. On December 29 he had a call from Don Cameron, "boss" of Pennsylvania, and recorded his opinions on cabinet members. "He inclines to be pleased with McVeagh for Attorney General and suggested Robert Lincoln for the cabinet." Before that he had corresponded with Grant asking his opinion on possible southern members of the cabinet.

The upshot of Garfield's negotiations, letters and queries was the following memorandum, dated January 16. "If I were compelled to make a cabinet today, it would read: State Department, Blaine; Treasury, Knox or Allison; New York, James or Morton; Pennsylvania, McVeagh; Indiana, Harrison; Illinois, Lincoln; South, Phillips (?) or Morgan." It is interesting to note that four of the seven men finally chosen for the cabinet are in this list and three others, Allison, Harrison and Morton, were offered places and declined. The only absolutely uncertain place at this time was that of the member to represent the southern Republicans. These names were suggested by correspondents, by deputations, by newspapers coming from many quarters, so that it cannot be definitely stated when they first came into view. One thing is certain; the tradition that Blaine had any influence in picking out the cabinet is utterly baseless. Garfield himself did the picking out from a mass of suggestions and from his own wide knowledge of men in public life.

The drawing up of a slate did not by any means indicate that Garfield's troubles were over: they had not, in fact, really begun. But before taking up the consequences to his cabinet-making of the disclosure that Blaine was to be Secretary of State, it may be well to mention some of the other problems with which Garfield had to deal during the period after his election. To begin with, he absolutely refused to make any promises or give any assistance to officeseekers. He set his face like a flint. The journal shows case after

case of this sort. February 3, for instance: "A Cleveland delegation wanted me to help Mathews' confirmation as Associate Justice. I refused to write. A Michigan delegation, Duffield and Heath, want Bagley for the cabinet and Heath for an office. No promises."

Some of the most absurd and annoying demands were made upon him by ill-balanced members of the Disciples faith, who felt that, with his election, a prospect of unexampled prosperity lay before them. He wrote to Hinsdale a long letter, November 17, evidently intended to be used to restrain the exuberance of such "Brothers." "Our people must not use me as the promoter of the views of our brethren. While I shall cheerfully maintain my old relation to them, I want it understood that it is the broad general views and not the special peculiarities of our faith that I desire to promote. Second. Our people must not make too much fuss about it. For example, they must not undertake to build a showy house in Washington. Third. Our people must remember that they are not a very large percent of the whole Republican party and a still smaller percent of the whole American people, and it would not be difficult for me to injure the administration by giving undue prominence to the Disciples in matters of appointment. Let us not flaunt ourselves in the face of the American people as though we had made a special conquest, but by modesty and moderation bear our part worthily and take whatever resulting advantages may come."

A ludicrous example of the temper that he deprecated appeared in a letter of January 21 to his wife: "Yesterday we had trial of our patience. A Kentucky woman, a Disciple who had lived less than two years in Cincinnati, came at noon armed with a couple of Disciple letters of recommendation and modestly wanted to be made P.M. of Cincinnati. She dismissed her driver before she came into the house and we apparently had her on our hands for five hours. Fortunately the express was an hour late and we got her off at 2:30. She was greatly grieved not to have seen 'Sister Garfield' and still more grieved that 'Brother Garfield' would not give her the P.O."

He had his troubles also with organizations which wished him, far in advance of entering office, to pledge himself to their cause. Some of them undoubtedly appealed strongly to his sympathies, but he steadily endeavored to avoid making any political promises. On January 14 a deputation of negroes waited on him, when he wrote, "I replied briefly and not very satisfactorily to myself," but his speech was well received by most of the press and—what was more important to him—won Hinsdale's approval. A few days later, January 19, a deputation of the Indian committee of the Presbyterian church called "to ask me to consider favorably the bill now pending in the House of Representatives in reference to allowing Indians to hold land in severalty, also to express the hope that I would appoint a Secretary of the Interior who had sympathy for the missionary work among the Indians."

The temperance advocates did not fail to fall upon him at an early stage of proceedings, demanding in letters, in the press, and through interviews that he should pledge himself to continue the Hayes practice of serving nothing containing alcohol at presidential dinners. By January 9 Garfield felt impelled to enter in the journal: "The question of wine at the Executive dinners is taking on proportions of importance. The whole discussion is an impertinence but it may have important political bearings." When Sherman paid a visit to Mentor, January 15, he first visited Garfield and then "went by Mrs. Garfield's request to talk over the wine question." Hinsdale came to his assistance in the press and, on January 23, "read me a strong paper on the wine question. I find myself getting angry at the impertinence of the temperance people and in some danger of acting on that anger."

What was still more urgent than the pleadings of oppressed races and reformers was the pressure upon Garfield to use his influence along various political lines which, for the most part, he steadily refused to do. He made it perfectly clear that he would not interfere with Hayes's policies in any respect during the last months of his term, although the two men were on such a friendly basis that it would have

given no offense. He declined to make any open statement on the funding bill which the Democratic Congress was considering, although it was wholly unwise in some of its main provisions and was opposed by both Hayes and Sherman. He did write to Blaine (January 7): "Don't fail to get a funding bill (at not less than $3\frac{1}{2}\%$) before January ends" and some days later asked him to work for a higher rate than 3 per cent, but when Grant, February 29, urged him to come out against the bill, he wrote in the journal: "I can not interfere with the President. He must take the responsibility." In view of the fact that the failure of the bill would mean a sharp problem for his own administration at the outset, this abstention is the more noteworthy.

In another matter, where the Hayes administration was not involved, he spoke more clearly. This was the problem presented by the recent election in Virginia, where a branch of the Democratic party, led by General Mahone, had split from the majority on the issue of "readjusting" the state debt in such wise as to come close to repudiation; had gained the balance in the legislature and was able, by a coalition with Republicans, to elect Mahone himself to the Senate. What made this important was that only by securing the aid of Mahone could the Republican party be sure of even a tie vote in the Senate. The question was, could Garfield, the apostle of financial good faith, countenance an alliance with a "readjuster," any more than with a greenbacker? From early in December he was under increasing pressure from various quarters to give his consent to such an alliance.

The journal says (December 29) that Cameron and his party "brought fifty-seven pages of manuscript written by Mahone of Virginia giving his views of the debt question of Virginia. They say he intends to act with the administration and they want the Republicans of Virginia to offer the state ticket next year. I answered that I must regard his statement as *ex parte*, but I wanted to hear the other side and see what Republicans said of it. If he acts with administration senators, he shall be treated like them, but he must take the first step." Garfield's full position, as laid forth in a letter to Whitelaw Reid, was this: that if Virginia was bankrupt,

i.e., if its obligations were such that it could not, at the time, meet them in full without excessive taxation, it ought to be asked "only to run the government economically, sustain its schools, and apply all the remainder of its revenues, raised by the maximum of reasonable taxation, to its debts." "Of course," he said to Reid (December 30), "the Republican party can give no countenance to any doctrines that savor of repudiation; but a clear distinction may be made between repudiation and bankruptcy." He invited Reid to publish this view and draw forth comment.

In this connection it should be said that Garfield's experiences in the recent Congresses had made him distrust any possibility of real conciliation of the South through such a policy as Hayes's. In a letter of December 30 to Hinsdale he gave a clear analysis of his position in the matter and an explanation of his reasons for selecting a southern representative in the cabinet only from among northern residents. "I have no doubt that the final cure for the Solid South will be found in the education of its youth and in the developments of business interests, but both of these things require time. We are likely, therefore, to have a southern question for many years to come. I do not believe a speedy cure is possible. Patronage to Democrats has been tried and has proved a dreary failure. Rebel Democrats appointed to office by Republicans take one of two courses—either they suffer complete ostracism by their neighbors, or they become more fierce assailants of the Republican party to keep themselves in good standing at home. In fact, the 'Solid South' accepts all patronage at the hands of Republicans as a confession of our weakness and their superiority. I am not sure that the appointment of Southern Republicans, however worthy, to prominent places is treated as any favor to that section. I do not know a better way to treat that people than to let them know that this is a modern free government, and only men who believe in it, and not in feudalism, can be invited to act in administering it. Then give the South, as rapidly as possible, the blessings of general education and business enterprise and trust to time and these forces to work out the problem."

What caused Garfield the greatest difficulty at this time was the demand that he intervene in sundry senatorial elections. It was part of his plan to abstain from any taking sides in factional contests within the Republican party, even when one of the factions had been for him and one against him in the convention. He turned aside, decisively, requests to express himself upon affairs in Nebraska (January 7) or Missouri (January 18). In Ohio the situation was complicated by the fact that Garfield's warm friend, Governor Foster, very angry at Sherman over allegations that he had been lukewarm in supporting the latter's candidacy at Chicago, was an active competitor against him for the Senate. Hay wrote to Garfield, December 6, imploring him to induce Foster to withdraw, and pointing out that Garfield's "neutrality" was being interpreted as adverse to Sherman. Garfield replied (December 9), "I agree with you that the Ohio senatorial conflict is full of peril to the party and to me, that is, if Mr. Sherman should be defeated." He was unwilling to volunteer any intervention; but when Foster himself asked Garfield whether he thought he ought to withdraw, Garfield instantly assented (December 15), adding: "Would it be quite safe or prudent to let Sherman be mustered out of the public service at this time? You and I were strongly and publicly committed last June to the position that he was eminently fit for conspicuous service. Can we now aid or consent to mustering him out without awakening severe reflections and perhaps dangerous divisions in the party?" After this, Foster did not delay withdrawing and Garfield wrote him (December 20) warmly approving his action.

In Pennsylvania the situation was different, for there the men who complained of his neutrality were the anti-Cameron Republicans. On January 1 Wharton Barker, the "original Garfield man," wrote him a long and angry letter intimating that he (Garfield) was tacitly supporting Cameron in his efforts to control the senatorship, and implying that his interview with Cameron at Mentor on December 29 had been the occasion of a deal. Garfield replied with some asperity (January 4): "Any intimation or pretense from any

quarter that I have taken any part [in the election] is without the least foundation. The visit of Senator Cameron here had no reference to that subject. If I am quoted by any one as having expressed any purpose to interfere, he has done me wrong."

One gets the impression, from letters and journals, that up to the time he made his first cabinet "slate," Garfield had been playing his game patiently and successfully. Nevertheless, he found it irksome. On December 11 he wrote: "The personal aspects of the Presidency are far from pleasant. I shall be compelled to live in great social isolation; almost every one who comes to me, wants something which he thinks I can and ought to give him, and thus embitters the pleasures of friendship. I must confront the problem of trying to survive the Presidency, or, as is said of criminals, 'live it down.'" On December 16 he wrote out a sample afternoon in full. "Thirteen men came from Pennsylvania, headed by a Judge from Westmoreland county, asking me to appoint General Harry White to a place in the cabinet. After they had gone, I was worried by a life insurance agent who did not disclose his business until I had wasted some time on him. At the same time, a lady from Covington, Kentucky, came to plead for a Post-office for her husband. Four old friends came to whom I told in a talk of fifteen minutes how my time was being curtailed by thoughtless friends and none of them saw the point. In the evening, Hon. Henry B. Perkins and Harmon Austin came and spent the night. General Grosvenor came, also Ed. Cowles. Had a long talk with them on the condition of state politics."

In all this the overwhelming emphasis upon personality, which gave to such men as Blaine and Conkling their chief zest in politics, struck Garfield as disagreeable. On January 13 he summed up: "Not a very satisfactory day. The question of persons and the value which each places upon his own merits as compared with the estimate which others place upon him is the chief evil of choosing men for the service." A few days later (January 19) he paused to reflect: "The winter is wonderfully beautiful with its perfect sleighing and the morning displays of hoar frost. I regret that I have

so little time to feed myself on the beauties which the season spreads over the world, I must shut myself up to the study of man's estimate of himself as contrasted with my own estimate of him."

It was doubtless Garfield's sense of his lack of interest in this side of government that induced him to make an earnest effort to get John Hay for private secretary, as well as his liking for the man and his agreement with his political attitude. When Garfield saw Hayes in Washington, the President offered to detail Swaim to be his private secretary, evidently thinking that the man who had acted as his constant friend and especial agent during the campaign would be the natural selection. But Garfield, after returning to Mentor, wrote Hayes that he thought such a course would be unwise. "There may be difficulties," he said (December 1), "in the way of detailing even temporarily an officer to act as my private secretary. I know there were many heart-burnings . . . growing out of Grant's course on that subject." This was an allusion to Babcock, Badeau and others of Grant's so-called "staff." A way was found to "take care" of Garfield's faithful friend by appointing him Judge-Advocate General, which Hayes was prompt in doing, but this action led Sherman, December 20, to warn Garfield against overdoing such "personal" promotions of Ohio officers, especially at the beginning of his administration. Garfield felt considerable sensitiveness on this point. He wrote to Hayes (December 1 and December 16): "I would not make, nor ask to have such an appointment made merely on personal grounds. But I know that Major Swaim is eminently fitted by ability and experience for that place," and he submitted a long statement of Swaim's service as proof. He replied to Sherman, "The case of Swaim is so exceptional that I hope it will not be taken as a precedent for what is to be done."

The way being thus cleared, Garfield wrote to Reid (December 7), the following interesting, self-revealing letter: "I am more at a loss to find just the man for Private Secretary than for any place I shall have to fill. The man who holds that place can do very much to make or mar the success of an administration. The position ought to be held in

higher estimation than Secretary of State. There is one man who fills my ideal of the fidelity, comradeship, culture, statesmanship, acquaintance with men and address required to make that place one of power and brilliancy. But I suppose he is wholly beyond my reach. I mean John Hay. I would not dare to ask him, for I know he deserves very much more. But he would double my strength and give me a great sense of security on the most dangerous side of the White House. Tell me if it is altogether preposterous to think of it as a possibility for a year at least."

Reid's reply gave Garfield sufficient encouragement to lead him to write the following letter to Hay, which clearly indicates that what he wanted was a sort of political chief of staff, bearing the relation to him that he had borne to Rosecrans. "I am casting about me," he said (December 10), "with a good deal of anxiety to find some one who will help to enliven the solitude which surrounds the Presidency. The unfortunate incumbent of that office is the most isolated man in America. If I could have the help of another mind, a trained, independent, friendly mind, I should feel that my strength was doubled and that I had at least one comrade in the wilderness. The Secretary of the President ought to rank with any of the seven members of the Cabinet. In a thousand ways, the President needs a trusted and capable friend at hand, one who can see the moves on the chess-board more clearly than the players can. Does it lie within the possibilities of the situation that you can help me in this way? I have hesitated a long time before venturing to ask you; for I know that you would be making a sacrifice—and if you wish to remain in the service of the government, you deserve a place which public opinion would consider more important. But, reflecting on what you and Mrs. Hay could do for me and mine, I have determined to write you and ask you what you think of it."

Hay's reply (December 25), full of friendliness and hearty good will, was nevertheless an emphatic declination, upon the simple ground that he was by taste and temperament unfitted for the place. "If I could share your own view of my fitness for the place, I should be inclined to sacrifice

all other considerations and go to work. But I cannot. The contact with the greed and selfishness of office-seekers and bull-doing Congressmen is unspeakably repulsive. The constant contact with envy, meanness, ignorance, and the swinish selfishness which ignorance breeds needs a stronger heart and a more obedient nervous system than I can boast."

In spite of this reply, Garfield still hoped to win him, sending Nichol, his political agent, to try to move him through his father-in-law, a resident of Cleveland. He also urged Blaine to use his influence (December 23). But Hay was not to be won and on December 31 wrote a long, amusing final letter refusing the position. Even in declining, he again gave Garfield friendly advice. "It is a comfort to know that you go into the Presidency with the best equipment possible. Besides the qualities that are personal to you, you know more of the past and present of government, more history, and more politics than any man since the younger Adams and you are free from his peculiar infirmities of temper. 'One thing thou lackest yet' and that is a slight ossification of the heart. I woefully fear you will try too hard to make everybody happy—an office which is outside of your constitutional powers. Confine your efforts in that direction, do as you think right, and it will be right nine times in ten and not far from right the tenth time, though the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing."

On receiving this Garfield wrote (January 4): "I am sorry to have vexed you with so many of my anxieties—and yet, though I am disappointed in the hope of having you near me, the incidental suggestions in your letters have helped and will help to compensate for the trouble I have caused you. Perhaps after all you are right in your conclusion. I will try to think so. In any event, whether the 'ossification' begins or not, I shall be, as ever, Very truly yours." Five days later Hay spent the night at Mentor. The journal says (January 9): "Had a long conversation with Hay on political questions. He is very bright and able. I more and more regret that I cannot have him for my private secretary."

The middle of January proved to be a turning-point in the history of Garfield's cabinet-making, for by the time he had completed his first tentative draft the temper of the ruling group in New York had reached the explosion point. Feeling certain after the outcome of the senatorial election that Blaine was working against them, and with their suspicions heightened by the rash language used by Blaine's friends, they now turned with redoubled intensity to the idea of forcing Morton into the Treasury Department. The opening gun was a letter from Morton himself (January 17), saying, "I have lost a seat in the Senate—my great ambition—*solely* on account of the belief of the leaders in New York . . . that I could have the position of Secretary of the Treasury." He intimated that the time had come for Garfield to give him that position of his own free will, before he was compelled to do so by the combined demand of "the two senators, Vice-President, Governor, nearly all the Republicans of the Legislature and the New York M.C.'s." The reason for this concerted and formidable movement, as explained to Garfield, January 24, by Pierrepont of New York, was that "Conkling wanted Morton in the Treasury as New York's reply to Blaine in the State Department." That is to say, Conkling regarded the apportionment of cabinet officers as a test of strength between himself and Blaine—a personal balance that ought to be maintained. This was reinforced a few days later (January 28) by a letter from Grant, clearly inspired from New York, saying of Blaine that, while he "had no confidence in his friendship or reliability," he could see the reason for appointing him. But in case he was to be in the State Department, his conclusion was that L. P. Morton, or "some one friendly to Senator Conkling should take the Treasury."

From numerous sources, chiefly Reid, H. E. Knox and others in New York and Washington, Garfield received daily reports of the rising wrath of the "Stalwarts." The situation looked so threatening to Blaine that he urged Garfield (January 20) to transfer his negotiations to Washington where he could be at close range. But Garfield's obstinacy

was by this time "set" with the peculiar tenacity which a patient man may develop under such circumstances. He wrote vigorously to Blaine (January 24), rejecting the proposal. "The Conkling men," he said, "want me *to go to them*. They hear various rumors which disquiet them, that they are to be ignored, etc. The road to Mentor is open and they shall be welcomed and treated fairly. Cameron came and I do not hear that he complains of his treatment. One senator writes me that Conkling has heard that I interfered against him in the N. Y. Senatorial Election (which is not true) and the writer thinks I ought to go to Washington and disabuse his mind on that question. I am not a suitor for favors at the hand of any who do not care to open correspondence with me and to appear to be so would create a world of misunderstanding. I understand your embarrassment in coming. It is enhanced by the talk of a class of people that you are to dominate the administration to the exclusion of other elements. You can do a great deal to allay that fear."

As a matter of fact, Blaine had given Garfield much general advice up to this point, but beyond his opposition to Windom and his arguments for Allison he had said chiefly generalities on cabinet matters. How little he knew of Garfield's counsels is shown by the fact that after Sherman's visit to Mentor he wrote at great length arguing against a rumored intention to ask him to retain the Treasury, when such an idea had never entered Garfield's head. The first time Garfield mentioned the New York difficulty to him was in a letter of January 19. Answering Garfield's letter of January 24, he now said (January 28): "I shall never *urge* a man upon you for the cabinet, but I will not hesitate to protest vigorously many men. I think that is a good distinction for me to observe." In another letter, two days later, he added: "As to my disposition to try to dominate, that is *mere rot*. My efforts at domination will cease when I urge upon you honest and disinterested counsel." Apparently, Blaine was really trying to hold himself in. As will be seen, the effort proved to be too great.

Garfield's letters to Sherman and Grant at this time were friendly and conciliatory. "I have never thought for a moment," he assured Grant (January 31), "of selecting from New York for a place in the cabinet, any one who is hostile to Senator Conkling." He reassured Dorsey also in regard to Blaine's "dominating," writing half-humorously. All this time he was receiving letters from the New York Independents, urging him to exclude any "Stalwart" whatever from the cabinet. Among others, Mrs. Garfield herself, now visiting *incognita* at Reid's house for shopping purposes, sent him the following letter (January 21): "Mr. Reid told me this morning that Morton had been very ugly in his talk about you, using the expression that seems to be so gratifying to the Conkling clique, 'That Ohio man cannot be relied upon to stand by his pledges.' And said that Mrs. Don Cameron said, with a toss of her head, after Mrs. Morton's outburst of indignation over the New York Senatorial election, 'O, Mr. Morton will be taken care of, if General Garfield does as he agrees to do.' You will never," went on the letter, "have anything from those men but their assumed contempt, until you fight them *dead*. You can put every one of them in his political grave if you are a mind to and that is the only place where they can be kept peaceable." The indignant Mrs. Garfield undoubtedly reflected the temper she found among Reid and his friends. To them, the one thing most desirable was a prompt rupture between Garfield and Conkling. Reid wrote at this juncture enclosing a letter from Robertson which protested against the inclusion of any "Stalwart" in the cabinet (January 25). "With two 'Stalwart' Senators and Vice-President from the State, the incoming Administration could in no other way so effectually put our independent delegates to the Chicago Convention in a political metallic casket, hermetically sealed, as by placing in the cabinet a 'Stalwart' from New York."¹

With all these warnings and protests before him, Garfield now entered upon the second stage of his cabinet-making, which was marked by his persistent, untiring efforts to

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 52.

secure a New York man who would be at once loyal to himself and *persona grata* to the Conkling group. He did this, as will be shown, in the teeth of the stubborn opposition of Conkling himself, of Conkling's political enemies and of most of his Ohio advisers. The spirit in which he began this search is shown in the comment with which he returned to Reid Robertson's letter quoted above (January 29): "Of him I entertain high regards, but his suggestion in this letter seems unreasonable. I ought to be ready for fight but should not begin it." He began, accordingly, to receive suggestions and collect information about sundry New Yorkers who might be considered cabinet material, but chiefly about two men whose names appear in his journal on January 17 as follows: "James of New York may be a happy solution of that trouble. Dorsey suggests Judge Folger for Secretary of the Treasury." James was postmaster of New York; Folger, a state judge. Turning to his political friends, he asked them their opinions, first of James, then of Folger. On January 23 he wrote to Blaine, "Do you think James could separate himself from his chief enough to be independent or is the political umbilicus too strong?" He also asked Dorsey and Sherman. From all three the response was adverse. Blaine said, "Tom James would be nothing but a tool of Conkling, certain to retail cabinet secrets." Dorsey observed, "I am opposed to James' appointment because he is not fit for this great place and he is the merest tool of scheming men in this state." Sherman remarked bluntly (February 10) that "he would be but a proxy, spy and agent of Senator Conkling." In spite of all this, Garfield kept James on his list of availables.

Meanwhile, he turned his attention to the other New Yorker, Judge C. J. Folger. He wrote in the journal (January 28): "The New York people seem to be greatly stirred up at the prospect of having Blaine in the cabinet. They want a Conkling agent for his influence. If I could find a large true man in New York for the Treasury, I would take him. Perhaps Judge Folger would do." So he wrote to a large number of persons during the next few days, asking

their opinion of his fitness. While waiting, he had to meet the threatened attack from New York which proved less formidable than Morton had predicted, although sufficiently irritating.

During his wife's absence Garfield beguiled the tedium by writing, in the form of a letter to her, a detailed account of each day's doings, from which some quotations may be made to show his discomfort of mind and body. "Saturday (January 29) dragged its weary length along, with a crowd of hungry office seekers and others who would have been glad to cut me up, inch by inch, in hopes of dissecting some secret from my nerves or brain. In the meantime, very grave and difficult complications were preparing for me in Washington. The bitterness swelling up in New York minds over the supposed domination of Blaine in the cabinet was fast coming to a head. On Thursday night, a telegram came from Governor Cornell at Albany, asking if he and a friend could see me on Saturday afternoon and evening. I knew from your letters that you had probably had an important conference with Blaine and that you had news from the vital center of New York affairs. . . . Cornell and Platt arrived here at seven Saturday evening and stayed until ten. I wrestled with them as best I could. When they asked to see you, I would have given an arm to have had you here. Then, one of them remarked, they understood Mrs. G. was in N. Y. at a private house and I knew that Mr. Conkling knew you were the guest of his enemy,—and I cursed the dressmakers again that they had pushed you into the second week and betrayed your whereabouts. I covered the defeat as well as I could by remarking in as careless a tone as I could command that you were there shopping quietly to avoid the crowd."

The conference was briefly summarized in Garfield's journal: "At seven, Governor Cornell and Senator Platt came and spent three hours, urging Morton for the Treasury. I told them it was inadmissible. In answer to their inquiry if I had ruled New York out from that place, I said, not New York, but Wall Street. I asked them what they

thought of Conkling and Blaine for the first two places. They thought Conkling could not be spared from the Senate. I asked them to suggest some name; they had none to offer but Morton. I asked them what they thought of Judge Folger for Attorney General or the Treasury. They said he was a good man but could not safely be spared." Clearly no progress was possible through discussions of this sort, in which the Conkling agents would accept nothing but complete submission on Garfield's part.

The letter continued: ". . . Sunday morning brought Governor Cox and Henry E. Knox from opposite directions, one of them to go over the whole situation from the viewpoint of an independent, and the other to detail the perils of the New York situation. I gave the day to them with every nerve throbbing with a dull ache. . . ." He waited, vainly hoping for his wife's return, expecting a message that did not come. Finally, after he had started to go to bed, he heard that a long dispatch of seventy-five words had come in. "I thought," he wrote, "that at last the long and mysterious silence was to be broken. But I found it was a telegram asking me to meet with the Classical Society at Washington on the tenth of February and read a paper on the comparative merits of Tacitus, Green, and Macaulay as historians!! I shall answer this morning that I can give no time to any history more ancient than A.D. 1881."

After a day or two of reflection, Garfield made several moves in the political game which he found himself compelled to play. Abandoning his passive attitude toward Conkling, he invited him (January 31) to visit Mentor, and also invited Logan, whose "nose was out of joint" because Allison had been asked there while he had not been. He also wrote to Morton, repeating his refusal of the Treasury Department and regretting his failure to accept the Navy. In addition, he notified Blaine of his action and mentioned another possible solution which had occurred to him. "I have Chandler's letter," he wrote (January 31), "and one from Reid, making a suggestion which I did not suppose was in any mind but my own—that is, to ask Conkling to take a

portfolio. If he would take it and there would be peace, all well. If fight, isn't a fight at short range better than from behind the intrenchments of an executive session? I shall not move in this till you write me. If it seems best to make the tender, what would you say to exchanging seats—you for the Treasury, he for State? In any case, if I make the offer, I shall tell him you are to be his colleague, so that he may see that part of the field." After this startling proposal, Garfield went on to ask Blaine what he would think of Folger, suggested by Dorsey, as an alternative choice.

Eleven days passed before Conkling accepted the invitation to visit Mentor and five more before the interview actually took place. Again it is to be noted that Conkling, in accepting, employed the same phraseology which Cornell had used on December 13 to Garfield, and which he himself repeated on December 15 to Dorsey (February 8), "I need hardly say that your administration cannot be more successful than I wish it to be, nor can it be more satisfactory to you, to the country, and to the party than I will labor to make it." One is tempted to see in this, the effort to make what is called a "paper record"; the use of diplomatic phrases indicating friendliness, by a man who at heart was anything but friendly.

During these sixteen days Garfield's correspondence was crowded with letters from his principal political friends, most of them protesting more or less strongly against his idea of appointing any New York "Stalwart" in general, or the men whose names he was considering in particular. From Blaine he drew forth a perfect eruption of excited letters, the whole burden of which was the extreme folly of offering cabinet positions to any New York organization man; James would be a spy, Morton was unfit, Folger's reputation was doubtful (February 5). As to the suggestion of offering a place to Conkling, Blaine denounced it with all the power of his vocabulary. "His appointment," he concluded in his vitriolic letter, "would act like strychnine upon your administration—first, bring contortions and then be followed by death."

In another place Blaine showed how he viewed the cabinet positions largely as strategic points for preparing the campaign of 1884. "All I fear is," he protested, "that your instinctive generosity will carry you beyond the limits of fair justice to yourself. I say this because I do not want you to trust the great patronage departments where there is the remotest danger of their being used adversely to your personal interests." Later in the same letter he again urged at length the claims of Allison for the Treasury, dwelling on his personal amiability and honesty. He again attacked Windom as incompetent, and added: "Besides he has the Presidential bee in his bonnet *terribly*. My bee is dead or has ceased to sting, but Windom's is just fully hatched and is very active, buzzing all the time." Here again it appeared that his objection to Windom was largely the fear that he might use his position in the Treasury to further his presidential aspirations. Blaine ate, drank and breathed politics.

Garfield replied calmly to his friend's violent tirade against Conkling for the cabinet (February 7), "I have never given the consent of my mind to the idea of offering him a place and yet there is enough audacity in it to make it an interesting suggestion." Of Blaine's objections to the other men Garfield took no notice. It is interesting to find, in estimating Blaine's personal influence, that Garfield presently offered a cabinet position to each one of them, ignoring Blaine's opposition, and that two of them accepted and were Blaine's colleagues. The impression is that the latter's impassioned warnings fell perfectly flat.

While waiting for Conkling's visit and while collecting opinions upon Folger's fitness, Garfield was busily at work adjusting the other members of the cabinet. One name on the January 16 slate he had to abandon, that of Harrison of Indiana. When the latter called, on January 22, to discuss possible cabinet members from his state, Garfield reported: "I told him if I took one from Indiana, it would probably be himself. He is in doubt whether he ought to leave the Senate. I like him." An Indiana deputation arrived on January 31, but could not unite on a single candidate and

Garfield still hoped for Harrison, until the latter wrote, on February 4, definitely declining to be considered. Blaine meanwhile had suggested Gresham of Indiana as a possible Secretary of the Treasury,—anything to exclude Windom,—but Garfield was slow to accept him as cabinet timber.

Another position difficult to fill was that of a member from the South. One name after another was considered, only to be abandoned. Garfield wrote to Blaine (January 24): "The Southern member still eludes me as Creusa's image eluded Æneas. One by one, the Southern roses fade. Do you know of a magnolia blossom that will stand our Northern climate?" For some time Garfield favored Judge Baxter of Tennessee, but finally came down to a choice between W. H. Hunt, suggested by Hayes, and Judge Don Pardee, his old friend of the Forty-second, both resident in Louisiana.

By February, R. T. Lincoln was definitely selected as a cabinet member from Illinois, especially after Logan, in the interview of February 11, had approved his name. S. M. Cullom, in his reminiscences takes credit for suggesting the name to Garfield on February 15 and inducing him to promise to appoint him,¹ but the journal shows that he had been suggested by Cameron on December 29, was on the January 16 slate and had been approved by Logan, all before Cullom arrived.

All this time he continued his search for a Stalwart alternative, in case Folger should fail him. On February 10 ex-Senator Timothy O. Howe of Wisconsin, a strong Grant man, was mentioned by Senator Sawyer. "The suggestion strikes me favorably," wrote Garfield, "and it may aid me in solving the Treasury problem. It is strange that I have not thought of him before." But when he turned to Sherman and learned that he considered Howe "honest and sound but lacking breadth of grasp and capacity to handle details," he abandoned the idea promptly. Sherman still favored Windom, with J. J. Knox and Allison in order (February 16). In thanking him Garfield said, "Your suggestions are more to the point than any I have yet received." As to Folger, he

¹ Cullom, *Fifty Years of Public Service*, p. 125.

received favorable replies from two of the leading lawyers in the United States, Senator G. F. Edmunds and W. M. Evarts, Secretary of State, and another from his classmate, H. E. Knox of New York. "The same mail," he wrote, "brought two letters on the other side."

On February 3 Garfield drew up a list of names eligible for cabinet positions; Blaine, McVeagh and Lincoln were still considered fixed, and also Harrison, although the last had a query after his name, owing to his hesitancy. For the Treasury, Garfield had no less than six alternatives; Folger, Knox, Pierrepont, Wilson (of Iowa), Allison and Windom. For an unnamed position, apparently destined for a distinctly western man, he bracketed Rublee and C. C. Washburn of Wisconsin, Miller of California and Windom; and for another place, to be held by a southern man, he grouped Baxter, Longstreet, Hunt and Warner. Eleven days later, February 14, he drew up another set of alternatives, comprising twenty names, in which he added Howe, Phillips, Kirkwood, Morton, Routt (of Colorado) and his old friend, Pardee, and dropped Knox, Pierrepont, Allison, Rublee, Washburn and Warner.

It was with these numerous alternatives in his pocket that Garfield confronted Conkling when, on February 16, the New York "boss" finally appeared. In view of what had already taken place between them and what had been reported from Reid and the New York Independents, and in view of the warnings he had received from such men as Hayes, Sherman and Blaine, no more striking illustration of Garfield's tendency to think well of all men could be found than in the descriptions he left of this visit. He had just received the following merciless analysis of Conkling from Sherman, who wrote with his usual cool precision. "I know him well," said Sherman (January 23), "and while I concede his ability as a party leader and debater, I think him greatly over-rated in other respects. His egotism is unbounded. He is sensible to criticism and ridicule. He never interests himself in anything but personal antagonisms, he never rises above a Custom House or a Post-Office. As an

able Republican and the recognized leader of a great state where bosses seem to be necessary, he is entitled to consideration and full recognition but, if you ever yield to him so that he thinks you fear him, he becomes overbearing. He treats his New York friends like lackeys. Your great office will enable you, without loss of self-respect, to make advances to him to do what seems best and proper to conciliate him." Then followed a page of advice which Garfield must have taken profoundly to heart. "If that fails," went on Sherman, "then the only way is to give him blow for blow. President Hayes could have crushed him but would not. If Conkling opens on you as he did on Hayes you ought without delay or hesitation to do what Jackson did with his senatorial enemies, strike them back through their friends. The Executive always has power to command the respect even if it cannot win the favor of members of Congress."

In spite of all this Garfield wrote of the interview as follows in the journal (February 16): "I had a full conversation on the cabinet and kindred subjects. His knowledge of men is fuller and more accurate than I had expected and, in the main, his judgment is sound. He appeared to be frank and friendly. Urged the importance of recognizing New York and thought Morton would do well in the Treasury. I told him I thought the objections insuperable. I asked his opinion of Folger and he spoke highly of him, but thought it would be dangerous to the party in New York to take him from the Chief Justiceship. I told him I wanted his friendship and believed we could work together with independence and mutual respect, but I could not give Morton more than the War or Navy."

Still more striking were his letters to Blaine and Hinsdale, written immediately afterward. To Blaine (February 18): "The conference was conducted in excellent temper. He really made no demand, but strongly urged the fitness of Morton for the Treasury. He said he believed it would be better all around, to appoint no cabinet officer from New York than to take one for a minor place. He volunteered the statement that he made no objection to your appointment, but thought New York ought not to have a less place than

the Treasury, Interior, or P.O. He urged no candidate for that place and mentioned no other of his own accord, except Astor. He also spoke of James for the P.O. but closed by preferring Morton." To Hinsdale (February 18): "The Senator has come and gone and we had not less than six hours' conference which was very frank on both sides; and I think the sense of independent self-respect in each was enhanced by it. On one side, information, suggestions and argument, but no demands; on the other, listening, questioning, comparison of views but no promises. I think much better of him than I expected to and I shall be surprised if he has not carried away the same impression."

It is almost pathetic to see how persistently Garfield clung to his hope of coming to a good friendly understanding with Conkling and thereby ending all troubles, when not a trace of any such feeling appears in anything reported from the other side. The New York senator, according to his biographer and according to Platt, continued to feel the same half-scornful distrust of Garfield's sincerity and honesty, and contempt for his simplicity of manners. A description of this visit, given by Conkling in an interview in May, 1881, though doubtless tinged with the excessive bitterness that by that time had developed, may be taken as indicating how utterly wrong Garfield was in his supposition that the interview had in the least made Conkling think better of him. "When he got to Mentor," runs the report of Conkling's conversation,¹ "he was amazed at the trifling and undecided manner of his host. It seemed that Garfield had called him all the way from New York only to tell him that 'for many reasons' he could not appoint Levi P. Morton Secretary of the Treasury and that Judge Folger was not a man of piety. Some one (and Conkling's lip curled scornfully) had told him that Folger drank whiskey instead of tea, like Garfield, and that he had heard that Folger, in other ways, was not a man of good character." "I told General Garfield," said

¹ Quoted by J. L. Connery, "Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, June, 1897, Vol. XXIII, p. 150.

Conkling, "that I had always known Folger as a man of honor and I asked him why Folger's character was brought into question. Do you contemplate offering him a cabinet position? If such is your purpose, I would like to advise you that the Treasury is the only post which would satisfy New York and that our state would prefer to be passed altogether if it could not obtain the department to which its rank and service entitle it.

"Garfield evaded an answer to this question of the Senator and invited the latter 'to tea! tea! tea!' Conkling thus repeated the word three times, but I could not decide from his manner whether the contemptuous reference to tea was meant as a reflection upon the Garfield hospitality, or was another sarcastic allusion to the talk about Folger's habits. What was unmistakable was that he expected General Garfield would have asked him at least what cabinet position would satisfy New York and would have shown some desire to please him [Conkling] who, with General Grant, had done so much for the success of the ticket." Then follows a passage which shows to perfection the gulf that yawned between the temper and habit of thought of the two men. "What else could Garfield's allusions mean," Conkling asked me, "if not that Folger was a man unfit for a cabinet position?" And yet no sooner had Conkling left Mentor than Garfield proceeded to summon Folger to a confidential conference and offered him the post of Attorney General in his cabinet. "Was it only to find out what I would like," exclaimed Conkling bitterly, "and then do just the opposite that this man Garfield called me to Mentor? Was it only to make his indifference to my wishes more marked that he summoned Folger, whose character he had impugned, the moment my back was turned, to offer him an office less in dignity than I said New York was entitled to?"

Garfield immediately sent for Folger, hoping that in spite of Conkling's stubbornness in insisting on Morton for the Treasury, he would be satisfied by the appointment of so sturdy a party man. On February 19 he appeared. "I was greatly pleased," wrote Garfield, "with his spirit and his manifest great ability. I broached the question of his going

into the cabinet. He gave me two reasons why I should not take him. One was the assault upon him in reference to his first election. The other was his suit now in the Supreme Court for a large claim on the Treasury. I answered that the last might embarrass him for the Treasury but would not for the Attorney-Generalship which I offered him. He said he could not answer until he reached home."

Again, in making this offer, Garfield moved in flat opposition to the advice of Blaine, Sherman, Hayes and Wheeler. Blaine sent a sheet (February 20) filled with bitter protests against any offer to Folger, saying "the rumor created little less than a panic among your friends here today. In New York, it is understood to be the original concoction of Dorsey, Tom Murphy, and a whole nest of unclean birds who wish to go in for loot and booty." He piled up arguments for four excited pages, predicting the ruin of the administration and the loss of all its prestige at the start. Sherman's letter was more specific and important than Blaine's sputtering. He quoted Hayes and Wheeler, the latter a New Yorker, as both very adverse to the proposal and gave a long, detailed and hostile analysis of Folger's record. If Garfield was determined to nominate him for the Treasury, "I would vote for his confirmation," said Sherman, "but his nomination would at once precipitate a controversy about the New York custom house, for it is not to be supposed that with Arthur and Folger in such high positions, Merritt would be allowed to remain or a single shred of civil service reform be left."

Wholly unmoved by Blaine's excitement, Garfield calmly wrote him (February 22), "I found him exceedingly able, far more independent than any mere follower of Conkling can be and a man I am sure you would like." By this time, Blaine had entirely abandoned his earlier policy of reticence and was pouring letters upon Garfield filled with imperative advice concerning appointments. He particularly disliked Dorsey and accused him repeatedly of a corrupt plot "to secure the second Assistant Postmastership through which channel, in my judgment, there are cunning preparations being made by a small cabal to steal half a million a year

during your administration." On the other hand, Blaine pushed certain of his own friends with immoderate vigor, especially W. E. Chandler, for the position of Solicitor General. He made it clear that it was a purely political appointment, based on Chandler's skill in party management. "Chandler," he urged, "possesses the singular faculty or series of faculties that would make him extraordinarily useful to any president." Three days later he returned to the attack with an eight-page letter, treating of the cabinet as if its construction were solely a matter of strengthening the party organization in the states from which appointments were to be made. As a sample of the politician's mind, this letter of February 16 was unsurpassed. "When you take the nine Republican states that begin with Ohio and end with Kansas you have the very heart of the Republican party, and your Administration must nurture, develop and sustain the party in those states. Three cabinet appointments will, I am sure, be necessary there." In approving the selection of Wayne McVeagh for the cabinet as recognizing Pennsylvania and at the same time pleasing the Independents, he concluded: "There is no other cabinet stone in your hand that will kill so many political dogs at one throw. I guess you'd better fire it."

Blaine also tried to induce Garfield to give a cabinet position to Stephen Elkins, actually sending him a draft letter to use, and intimating that he would find him "a strong and valuable friend who may prove useful to you at odd times." Garfield acquiesced in the Chandler plan but quietly turned aside the Elkins request with the same ignoring of machine politics that he had shown in the handling of the Folger matter. It is interesting to see how the fertile-minded Blaine, seeking to head off Folger, tried a new tack, and on February 22 suddenly endorsed Wharton Barker of Pennsylvania for the Treasury Department, dwelling in language of fulsome eulogy on his "high character, great ability, boundless energy, enlarged and various experience, wide business connections, high social position, an ambition that is honorable, and a fame that is already enviable on more than one continent." But not even this eleventh-hour appeal for the

"original Garfield man" of the winter of 1880 and the instigator of the persistent Garfield vote in the national convention could move him from the list of eligibles upon which he had already settled.

On February 23 Garfield's hopes were dashed by Folger's refusal to accept a cabinet position. He was thus brought back exactly to where he had been a month before, with the inauguration only ten days away. With no more time for hunting up compromise candidates, Garfield moved to close the matter and, on February 26, formally made the offer of the Navy Department to Morton, requesting a definite reply by February 28. On that day Morton accepted "by telegraph." Garfield then prepared invitations to other persons which had been held up pending the New York negotiations. McVeagh was to be offered the Attorney Generalship; Lincoln, the War Department; Allison, the Interior; and Windom was notified that he would receive an offer later, evidently meaning the Treasury. A slate, drawn up at this time, February 27, shows that the decision for Allison was made at the last minute over Kirkwood, and that the choice between Hunt and Pardee as southern member was still unsettled. With these notes ready to send when Garfield should reach Washington, the cabinet question seemed to be settled.

During the four months since the election, the newspapers of the United States, particularly those of the East, had been vainly trying to discover what was happening. The visits of politicians to Mentor were closely watched, and the visitors on their return were assailed by interviewers; reporters were sent to Mentor to pick up gossip; everybody who was supposed to be in Garfield's confidence was questioned. Apparently the seekers got very little, for the men who visited Garfield during December and January refused to talk. Blaine seems to have been the only one who "leaked." Under such circumstances, conjecture flourished unchecked. It was commonly assumed that every one who went to Mentor received a cabinet offer and the names of such were continually being combined in "authentic slates." Not one has been noted which even remotely resembled the truth, of

course. When Garfield's negotiations with the New Yorkers reached a definite stage,—including the offer of the Navy to Morton, and the offer to Folger,—it is clear that his actions were promptly disclosed, for they appeared in newspapers, correctly stated, in a few days; but what took place between Conkling and Garfield on February 16 remained wholly concealed. The *New York Sun*, pursuing its steady persecution of Garfield, printed wholly imaginary accounts of his policies, his difficulties and crushing burdens, constantly insinuating that he was a mere weakling, cringing first to one and then to another Republican leader. In no single instance did the *Sun* happen to guess right. There is not one word of truth in anything that Dana printed about the cabinet negotiations.

The one man, after Blaine, who was constantly reported as a cabinet fixity was Governor Foster of Ohio, especially after he had withdrawn from contesting the Ohio senatorship with Sherman. These reports came not only from Washington and New York papers, but from those in Ohio, even including some that were close to Foster himself. Yet it is an interesting fact that not once in his journal or letters did Garfield ever mention Foster's name as among cabinet possibilities, nor did it appear in any slate.

During all these weeks and months of diplomatic manœuvres, Garfield had taken what comfort he could out of the farm and the sadly interrupted family life at Mentor. One finds notes on repairs and threshing buckwheat. December 22 he sowed wood ashes and bone dust on the meadow to test their comparative effects on the grass. In the midst of records of political callers, there are items on family visiting, the return of the boys from school and attendance on a Garfield family reunion at Solon, January 1 and 2, which was adjourned to Mentor, January 6. But this reunion brought him more sadness than anything else, as he saw the signs of age and physical breakdown in his older brother and in his sisters. "It was a sad meeting in the midst of rejoicings," he wrote Hinsdale (January 5). "My brother has greatly failed in health and is a stooped, old man. His path and mine separated when he was sixteen and I, seven. My

sisters too are old and broken by more than thirty years of misfortune. On Sunday I attended the Solon church, which was so full of memories that I could hardly observe the present, except to see the havoc which time had wrought on the faces of old friends."

All through his thought in this winter ran a vein of foreboding which, in later years, was frequently recalled by the superstitious. When in February, 1881, he went once more to Hiram to attend the funeral of a relative, his speech to the faculty and students began: "Today is a sort of burial-day in many ways. I have often been in Hiram and have often left it; but, with the exception of when I went to war, I have never felt that I was leaving it in quite so definite a way as I do today." It ended as follows: "I cannot see what lies beyond. I may be going on an Arctic voyage; but be that as it may, I know that years ago I builded upon this promontory a cairn, from which, wherever my wanderings may lead me, I can draw some sustenance for life and strength. May the time never come when I cannot find food for mind and heart on Hiram Hill!"¹

"I visited General Garfield late in February," wrote Rockwell.² "Everything that was best was unchanged. He was still the reticent, self-contained, self-counseling listener; in all else, frank, open, boyish. Yet, behind all, there was something indefinable that suggested a change in his mental habits. I spoke of the unusual loneliness that his new position would bring. The thought seemed to strike him with special force and he referred to this cause many regrets that new and unexpected relations would inevitably arise with scores of friends, relations that the highest considerations of public duty would dictate, compelling the ruthless setting aside of old and tender ties in the interest of public necessities. He said, with the deepest fervor, 'I fear it remains for me to make my pathway over the wrecks of human hearts.'"

¹ Hinsdale, *President Garfield and Education*, p. 109.

² Rockwell, "From Mentor to Elberon," in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 434.

As the day drew near when he must leave for Washington, Garfield wrote these pathetic words to his faithful friend, Harmon Austin (February 7): "It is a great grief for me to go away without visiting you once more, in your own house, before I leave. In fact, few people would believe that I go away with great sadness, but such is the fact. I know I am bidding goodbye to my old freedom and to many good friends whose countenances and counsel I shall miss, and, worst of all, I know many of them will be disappointed in me and many will be alienated. But I shall feel sure that our friendship of so many years will not be shattered or dimmed by time nor by the whirl of events."

On February 28 the party left Mentor. "The forenoon was devoted to giving final orders about the management of the farm and to disposing of books and papers. The crowd of callers increased. At twelve-fifteen, the last load left the house. Several hundred people at the depot. A. L. Tinker made a speech to me and I said a few farewell words to my neighbors." So the journey was begun. "Speeches at Ashtabula, Warren, and Youngstown," and incessant callers boarding the train. The family reached Washington March 1 and divided, most of them going to the Riggs House, but three staying at the White House or at Rockwell's. "The rush and swirl of callers was too much to be remembered without discomfort," wrote the hunted man.

No sooner had Garfield seen his political friends than he found his cabinet troubles were by no means over. On March 1 he recorded, "Slate generally approved but Allison pressed instead of Windom. Morton pleased with his new place but his New York friends are not." At the end of this day comes a significant sentence—"The tonic of Washington life is good for my mind." The closer contact with the personal and party problems in the place where his public life had been led began to revive in him a fighting spirit. He was soon to need it. A note from Blaine (March 1) shows that he was still working against Windom and for Allison in the Treasury. "The positions reversed, you would have everything in splendid shape. Do not send for Windom until

I have seen you again." An extract from a letter of Reid at this juncture gives additional details of the "inside" negotiations and particularly of Blaine's efforts to control things. "Allison," Reid wrote, "would have taken the Treasury, but both Garfield and Blaine are doubtful about the Interior. He is now with Garfield, having been sent for, to the Senate, an hour ago. I saw McVeagh's invitation mailed before coming up to my room. Lincoln, Morton, and Blaine have already accepted. Windom's letter has not been sent and probably will not be until the Allison matter is settled."¹

The next morning the slate cracked. As described by Garfield, the sequence of events was as follows. "Morton broke down on my hands under the pressure of his New York friends who called him out of bed at four this morning to prevent his taking the Navy Department. I told him he must ask to be released if he wanted to go, which he did by letter in the afternoon. The New York delegation are in a great row because I do not give the Treasury to that state."

Here again Reid's letters give additional particulars. "The storm over the cabinet is lively," he wrote on March 2. "Blaine is up in arms against Windom. Blaine an hour ago wanted to unite our forces on James as Postmaster General, if that concession to New York would secure in turn an agreement to Allison in the Treasury. Garfield appealed to me to suggest some man from New York, if Morton refused and declared that he was tempted to appoint Judge Robertson himself, the very head and front of the anti-Conkling people. But that will surely not be done." Evidently this was a half-humorous remark of Garfield's.²

Morton's withdrawal left the Navy Department vacant and necessitated a reconsideration of several positions, with a drawing upon Garfield's reserve list. He seems to have been unimpressed with Blaine's objections to Windom, but would have been glad, for the sake of harmony, to have Allison in the Treasury, as the following note in the journal suggests: "It seems important to get a volunteer soldier into

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

the cast, if possible, and I am discussing Judge Gresham of Indiana and that would necessitate a change in the Treasury, Allison instead of Windom. On some accounts, this change will be more agreeable. I had James of New York telegraphed for. I want to measure him for Postmaster General." On the same day, Garfield in person asked Hunt to join the cabinet, leaving the precise position to be adjusted later.

Garfield's sending for James was another indication of his stubborn determination to have a "Stalwart" in the cabinet, for, in so doing, he went directly against the desire of some of his strongest advisers. While Blaine was now willing to have James in the cabinet as part of a plan to keep Windom out, he had earlier denounced him as a mere agent for Conkling; and Dorsey and Sherman had committed themselves to the same view. When three men who stood as far apart as these united against a person, it took no inconsiderable tenacity on Garfield's part to persist in his course.

On March 3 the shuffling was begun. "During the forenoon," writes Garfield, "T. L. James of New York called and I asked him if he was so connected with any person that he would be embarrassed in giving his full and just support to me in any contest about matters of administration and policy. He seemed firm and earnest." Evidently Garfield was satisfied and the two came to an agreement. Here also the Reid letters give additional details, somewhat humorous in character, describing how James was secretly brought on from New York, smuggled to Blaine's house and then to the White House and finally whisked out of town without having seen Conkling at all.¹ To clinch matters, Reid dragooned Platt into the game. "Next," he wrote, "I had to get Platt and make him say that, while Conkling had nothing to do with this and knew nothing of it and had refused to recommend James or even mention him, he could not object with any reason, which he [Platt] fully approved. This I did, taking Platt up and asking the questions in Garfield's presence. G. is greatly pleased. James is profoundly grateful and pledged loyalty in the strongest fashion."

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, pp. 55-56.

The result of this "capture" of James was an immediate explosion on the part of the New York group. The only reference in the journal is in these words: "Later, Conkling, Arthur, and Platt came, the former full of apprehension that he had been or was to be cheated. Pleaded for Howe for Secretary of the Treasury." But a description of this interview, probably derived from Arthur, gives a far livelier picture of the occasion. E. B. Andrews¹ says: "As soon as Mr. Platt heard that James was to be the New York representative in the cabinet, he broke the news to Arthur and Conkling at breakfast. Arthur and Conkling at once left the table and all three repaired to the Riggs House where Garfield had rooms. They received an audience without delay and for over an hour, Conkling stormed up and down the room, charging Garfield with treachery to his friends in New York and asserting that he was false to his party. Garfield, sitting on the side of the bed, listened in silence to the tirade, violent and unseemingly, as all thought it. Both General Arthur and Senator Platt subsequently declared that for invective, sarcasm, and impassioned eloquence, this was the speech of Conkling's life."

The picture of the part played by Platt, first appearing to ratify the James appointment, then rushing off to tell his chief and reappearing with him to support his protest against losing the Treasury as an "answer to Blaine," is not an edifying one. If Conkling actually went as far as described, it seems astonishing that Garfield kept his temper, for he had one that was capable of flashing out. It is greatly to be regretted that no statement ever came from him more detailed than the brief one noted, with the exception of an account in the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* of four years later (March 8, 1885), purporting to quote him, which may or may not be authentic; but it comports so closely with Garfield's known language and temper that it is worth reproducing. The article reports a conversation which took place in April and it evidently confuses two different interviews of Conkling with Garfield,—that of March 3 with a later one

¹ *The United States in Our Own Time*, p. 323.

of March 20,—but the description of Conkling's speech can only apply to the earlier occasion. Garfield is represented as saying:

"There was a general, formal talk at first and I expressed myself desirous of being on good terms with all the elements in the party, but added that I would have to recognize my own political friends as well as the personal and political friends of other gentlemen. Judge Robertson's name was mentioned by me and, before I had got beyond the mention of it, Mr. Conkling literally took the floor and made a speech, a regular speech and a long speech, with all the declamation and gesture and characterization of a platform harangue or a stage 'piece.' I at first was surprised that a social call should be turned into a speech and all but the speaker into an audience. Then I studied the manner of the man, deliberate, intense, and at times angular, and at times graceful. He had it in him and it came out of him, but I am convinced that he had thought or written out what he would say, to the very words, for some of the sentences were such as no man gets off without preparation. He said nothing about principles. It was mainly about persons and much of it was about himself. What he said of other persons made on me the impression that he regarded Republicans as either his servants or his enemies. As he walked and talked and talked and walked, I reflected whether I should interrupt him or rejoin, and, if I had not been very much determined, I would have been very angry. I determined, however, to let him run himself down, especially as he had evidently wound himself up and wanted to run down. To this harangue, the others listened, apparently cowed or entranced. I listened, amused and a little indignant. I made no interruptions and no reply but acted at its close as if I considered the call at an end. They left." This is precisely like Garfield's manner of thought; it sounds veracious.

At all events, his stubborn determination to make the other side begin the fight was unshaken even by this severe test. He then offered the Treasury to Allison, who accepted it, but the next day, the morning of the inauguration, "Allison broke down on my hands and absolutely declined the

Treasury, partly for family reasons, but mainly from unwillingness to face the opposition of certain forces. Though this disconcerts me," he added, "the breakdown had better come now than later." He had to go to the Capitol to be sworn in with the cabinet incomplete.

Garfield came very near going to the ceremony with his inaugural address as well as his cabinet unfinished. Far back in December he had begun to prepare it in leisurely fashion, getting a broad background by reading the inaugural addresses of all his predecessors. As early as December 20, he "read and made notes on the two inaugurals of Washington. This was done, however, in the midst of interruptions." The next day: "Read John Adams' Inaugural Address. Far more vigorous in ideas than Washington's. Strong, but too cumbrous." The next: "Read the inaugurals of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. Curious tone of self-depreciation runs through them all, which I cannot quite believe was genuine." And so it went for a while, Garfield clearly enjoying his critical examination, but presently he was blocked by headaches and callers and was able before the end of the year to draw up briefs of only two more, Jefferson's first and second addresses. The matter of summarizing was then turned over to Nichol, who, by January 12, had nearly completed the task.

By January 17 he was beginning to be worried. "I must begin special preparations for the inaugural. I have half a mind to make none. Those of the past, except Lincoln's, are dreary reading. Doubtless mine will be also." A week later he was still unable to do any writing. On January 27, a day "freer from callers than any this month," he started on a first draft, laying out the headings. "I feel but little freedom in its composition," he lamented, "there are so many limitations." "The fact is," he added, "I ought to have done it sooner before I became jaded." On February 10 he again attacked it, but still felt "an unusual repugnance to writing." Day after day, he made the same entries, constantly recording his dissatisfaction, until finally, the day he went to Washington, his feelings reached a climax. "Late at night," he wrote (March 1), "I looked over the Inaugural

and have become so much dissatisfied with it that I have resolved to re-write it and made a beginning, though very weary." So snatching fragments of time, during the congested hours of March 2 and 3, he recast the entire address. "I wrote the last sentence at half-past two o'clock A.M. March 4." The inaugural address reads like that of a tired man, for it is devoid of imagination or elevated rhetoric. It is rather a plain, earnest statement, after Garfield's manner, of his thoughts about some of the deep problems before the country, not as party matters but as national questions, calling for solution. In many respects, it contains what he would probably have put into his letter of acceptance eight months before, had he not been tied down by the campaign exigencies.

Rhodes remarks: "It is extraordinary that when Garfield spoke in the House, in convention, or from the stump, he spoke with courage and eloquence; in his letter of acceptance and in his inaugural address, he failed utterly to rise to the standard which he had previously set up."¹ This will scarcely seem surprising when it is realized that in both these utterances Garfield was laboriously trying to do not what he wished but what he considered necessary; what, in fact, he had been nominated to do,—to please the "Stalwart" wing of the party. Furthermore, when the circumstances under which the inaugural was written are taken into account, in the midst of a complicated and engrossing political negotiation, its lack of buoyant power is easily accounted for.

During these days of festivity Garfield clung as much as he could to his old moorings. On March 3, after dinner at the President's with the cabinet, he went "to Wormley's where I found sixteen of my classmates at dinner. I spoke." What Garfield said is well worth quoting for its portrayal of the state of mind in which he approached his great test. "Tonight," he said, "I am a private citizen. Tomorrow, I shall be called to assume new responsibilities and, on the day after, the broadside of the world's wrath will strike. It

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 142.

will strike hard ; I know it and you know it. You may write down in your books now, the largest percentage of blunders which you think I will be likely to make, and you will be sure to find in the end that I have made many more than you have calculated, many more. This honor comes to me unsought. I have never had the presidential fever, not even for a day, nor have I it tonight. I have no feeling of elation in view of the position I am called upon to fill and I would thank God were I today a free lance in the House or the Senate. But it is not to be and I will go forward to meet the responsibilities and discharge the duties which are before me with all the firmness and ability I can command." On the next day, while he was engaged in his last struggles over the cabinet, he wrote in the journal: "The crowd of callers commenced early and continued in full force. The pleasant event of the day was the call of the Williams College alumni and the speech of Dr. Hopkins, to which I replied briefly." Still further back were the old Hiram ties. On March 4 he sent out the following note: "Dear Harry and Burke: Please come over and take breakfast with me at half-past eight tomorrow morning."

The inauguration itself was the usual military and civic festival. Popular attention was focused on every movement of the President-elect, and newspaper discussion was about equally divided between the question as to just how much Conkling's position near Garfield in the stand meant, and that as to whether the President's public kissing of his aged mother after the ceremony was done for effect or was a genuine impulse.

The cabinet problem was now rushed to a conclusion, with Blaine still fighting the Windom appointment to the last. "We are in a turmoil," wrote Reid (March 4),¹ "over Allison's action in refusing the Treasury. The Blaine people have now been urging Gresham for the Treasury but not with much success." Garfield himself, responding to a note from Blaine, wrote: "Surprises will never cease, but the world is wide enough to find in it a man for the Treasury.

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 56.

I note what you say of Gresham. There is yet time to form a new line of battle. Come to me at the White House the first moment I am free. With the love and comradeship of eighteen years and with faith in the next four years." This note has been cited as an example of Garfield holding out his hands to Blaine for guidance; but as a matter of fact what Garfield did was to override Blaine and select Windom. The journal says that after the inaugural reception at eleven: "Met Windom by appointment and, after a full hour's talk with him, offered him the Treasury. Retired at twelve-thirty, very weary."

The next day the slate was finally completed, as the following brief entries in the journal will show. "March 5, At ten Windom accepted. Sent him and Blaine out to inquire about Gresham, Hunt, and Kirkwood for the Interior. They returned to me at one-thirty and both agreed with me that Kirkwood was the safest suggestion and, so at two-thirty I had signed and sent to the Senate the exact cast with which I left Mentor, except that in New York, Morton was replaced by James for the Post-office. The result is better than I expected," he concluded. "Though not an ideal cabinet, it is a good combination of *esse et videre*."

The reader will hardly need to be told, after this narrative, that Garfield selected his own cabinet and accepted nobody's "domination." As was his nature, he worked with the party leaders and asked and took advice freely, but he rejected quite as much as he accepted and, among others, discarded Blaine's suggestions and disregarded his objections on occasion. It is also clear that the whole cabinet would probably have been settled upon by the time originally named, February 1, had not the insistence of the New Yorkers upon forcing Morton into the Treasury Department and accepting nothing else compelled Garfield to make repeated proposals, each of which, from its nature, made action upon the whole slate impossible until it was settled. Until it was definitely known whether a New Yorker, Morton, Folger or James, was going to have the Treasury, the Navy, the Attorney Generalship, or the Post Office, each of which was offered in turn, the occupancy of most of the other positions

remained uncertain. Unless one is willing to say that Garfield should have accepted Morton for the Treasury at the start, which would have been contrary to his deepest convictions of propriety and policy, as stated, it is not possible to find fault with his conduct; for, without anything but opposition from Conkling and his followers, he finally carried through the formation of a satisfactory cabinet, including a New York member who was personally unobjectionable to Conkling himself, as well as representatives of all sectional interests and all elements in the party.

Judging from Garfield's letters, it was his habit to say practically nothing to any of his correspondents or advisers of what other men had written to him. Of course, when things were talked over in a group, every one knew what was happening, but before that, *i.e.*, before Garfield's last negotiations with James, Allison and Windom, he kept matters entirely in his own hands. This led to various errors and conjectures both at the time and later. It enabled Cul- lom, for instance, to take the full credit for Robert Lincoln's selection, when in fact it had been practically settled a month before. It also led to a greatly exaggerated idea of Blaine's influence among persons who knew on what friendly terms he was with Garfield and knew also his insistent and dominating temper. Sherman, for instance, after briefly mentioning his own advice on the cabinet, says of Garfield,¹ "After his election, he was chiefly guided by his brilliant Secretary of State." But in fact Garfield treated Sherman's opinion with a good deal more respect than he showed to Blaine's.

This idea of Blaine's controlling influence has received some support from the selections from the correspondence between Blaine and Garfield published in the life of Blaine by Gail Hamilton in 1895.² These excerpts were chosen with studious care to avoid stirring unpleasant personal matters and omitted nearly all definite suggestions, while including

¹ *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 807.

² M. A. Dodge (Gail Hamilton), *Biography of James G. Blaine*, pp. 486-503.

a great deal of general advice on Blaine's part, to which, of course, Garfield gave a hearty assent. The impression they produced on the reader is given by Rhodes.¹ "Although Blaine perhaps exhibited too great masterfulness, he gave good advice about cabinet selections and future policies. Garfield accepted all his suggestions in good part and did not feel the slightest irritation at words wherein the future secretary seemed to assume that he would be the dominating head." Edward Stanwood, in his life of Blaine,² says that Garfield "consulted him at all times and probably followed his advice almost invariably." The foregoing analysis ought to be sufficient to put an end to this tradition, which does injustice both to Blaine and to Garfield. Most emphatically is it untrue that the latter was governed by Blaine's advice, for he offered cabinet positions in the teeth of Blaine's most bitter protests to Folger, Morton, James and Windom; refused to accept his urging of Allison for the Treasury until he found him desirable as a makeweight; and refused to appoint Gresham at all. Blaine's suggestion of Elkins he rejected and that of Barker he did not even notice.

When it is borne in mind that from start to finish the whole cabinet campaign was a distasteful and dreary matter to Garfield and that it was for him an exercise of his abilities and his character in the very region where he was supposed to lack strength and "will," it can hardly be denied that, after his patient and unantagonistic manner, he finally had his way and achieved a creditable outcome. The comment of Godkin in the *Nation* of March 31 shows that even the reformers were content: "It is but justice to him to say that he has done, thus far, on the whole, better than he has promised. The cabinet is not an ideal one, but it is far better than the cabinet 'rumors' of the newspapers led us to expect." From the *Nation*, this was high praise.

¹ *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 142.

² P. 238.

CHAPTER XXVIII
THE FINAL CONTEST WITH CONKLING

1881

WHEN James Abram Garfield became President of the United States, he assumed an office with most of whose functions he was thoroughly familiar from the standpoint of an observer. As chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations he had been in constant touch with all the heads of departments and had familiarized himself with every part of the administrative system of the government. As floor leader of the Republican party in the House he had come into close contact with President Hayes and the members of his cabinet in all that concerned the relations of the Executive to Congress. In addition, owing to his long service at Washington, since 1863, he knew practically all the men with whom he must come into governmental relations in both houses of Congress and in the departments.

The problem for him and for the country was this: could he, after so long an experience in legislation, discover within himself the ability to act with success in a totally different field? No doubt the qualities which had given him his position in the House would continue to serve him;—his geniality, his preference for conciliation rather than conflict, his readiness to listen to advice and information, his strong sense of the necessity for "getting things done" rather than wasting time in personal controversy. But his new position called for the prompt exercise of other qualities, such as Garfield had had no opportunity to display since he commanded the Eighteenth Brigade in the Big Sandy Valley. The President of the United States was vested with powers under the Constitution and the laws which must be exercised by him in person and with sole responsibility. He could take advice, but he himself must make decisions, con-

stantly, promptly; decisions involving the gravest and the pettiest. He must issue orders, he must make his personal will decide the fate of profoundly important measures and the happiness or unhappiness of innumerable individuals. Could Garfield do this successfully?

There can be no doubt that hundreds of persons who knew him questioned his capacity, in part because of his record as a harmonizer and legislative compromiser, but chiefly because of his personal bearing toward other men. His best friends could not help fearing that a man who utterly lacked the element of personal masterfulness and who never sought to impose his will on others might fail in exercising his authority and might carry into the presidency the same willingness to accept "compromises" which was wholly in place when dealing with legislation but might be actually ruinous if applied to executive decisions.

What none of these critics, friendly or unfriendly, realized was that beneath the conciliatory, uncombative exterior lay an unhesitating readiness to carry out the duties and responsibilities imposed on him by his office. They were slow to grasp that Garfield accepted, to the full, all the unavoidable implications of his position and was prepared to exercise, as President, an authority and a command which lay wholly outside his sphere as a House committee chairman and formed no part of his social personality. Even after he had begun to manifest unmistakable signs of a readiness to make prompt decisions and to exert complete authority, the public was incredulous and still hesitated to judge him capable of really positive action.

For this slowness Garfield himself was largely responsible, for unlike his presidential successors of a later day, he took no pains to proclaim his intentions, to publish his initiative, to emphasize his authority. As was his custom under all circumstances he simply acted and took no thought as to whether the public would conjecture that in so doing he took orders from someone else. Feeling no pride or satisfaction in his authority, he was not concerned to vindicate it to the outside world. In this way he permitted misconceptions to arise and to flourish, even to become part of history, which

a more self-conscious man would have taken pains to quash at the outset. Nevertheless, nothing is more clearly brought out by a study of Garfield's unpublished letters and journals and by the testimony of his cabinet than that from start to finish he assumed and exercised full control and authority over his administration and all its policies.

Before examining the evidence which supports such a judgment, it will be well to deal at length and separately with the sensational political contest which he found himself compelled to wage with the New York Senators in order to establish his leadership in the party and in the government. Since it is upon his handling of this affair that Garfield has been most severely criticised, and since the immediate outcome led ultimately to the most grave and tragic consequences, it is necessary to handle it in some detail and with every effort at scrupulous accuracy. The following chapter will be devoted wholly to the consideration of the so-called "Robertson affair," the one most dramatic episode in Garfield's short presidency.

Garfield well knew upon assuming office that there lay before him a thorny question inherited from the preceding administration, namely, the extent to which he would be willing to concede to Conkling the control over federal appointments in the State of New York. Not until he had assured him and his followers that he would abandon Hayes's methods and would "consult" with them regarding New York appointments had they been willing to lift a finger in the campaign. He had been warned from dozens of sources that the one thing which Conkling was determined to have was the power to decide who should and who should not occupy the lucrative and influential collectorships, post-masterships and the like. He had just emerged from the most harassing and irritating negotiations with Conkling and his agents over the proper cabinet position with which to "recognize" the state of New York, during which he had thoroughly learned the stubborn and unconciliatory nature of the man whom he had vainly tried to bring to the point of agreement. Judging from the evidence furnished by his letters and journals, which will presently be adduced, Gar-

field had made up his mind to settle the question of Conkling's position at an early date and to settle it once for all. But of this he said not a word.

The problem was at once attacked when on March 20 Garfield invited Conkling and Platt to a conference regarding offices. That this was taken by them to be a direct result of the "pledge" he had made in the preceding August to "consult" them, can be inferred from a note Platt sent, saying that he had to go to New York and requesting "that no action be precipitated on the important New York nominations until I return and can see you. I have waited, expecting that you would, as stated in our last interview, call for me when you needed any advice from me on these matters."¹ Conkling, however, presented himself as requested and the conference took place between the two men alone. As reported in Garfield's journal, it ran as follows: "Mar. 20. At three Senator Conkling called and spent two hours and a half reviewing the New York situation. I adopted many of his suggestions but I told him I must recognize some of the men who had supported me at Chicago. He wanted me to give them foreign appointments. I said they did not deserve exile but rather a place in the affairs of their own state. I will go as far as I can to keep the peace, but I will not abandon the New York protestants."

This is the only direct account of the conference from one of the participants, and since Garfield usually wrote up his diary with considerable promptness it may be taken as virtually contemporary. It is clear that Garfield raised the dangerous issue at once and that he failed to get Conkling to agree to any sort of division of New York appointments between the "Stalwarts" and the Independents. As in all his earlier dealings over the cabinet problem, Conkling would accept nothing but complete submission to his wishes. No Independent should, with his consent, occupy any federal office in the State of New York. The last sentences indicate that Garfield on his part was determined that some, at least, should do exactly that. As will be seen he had his

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 147.

plans already formed for this eventuality, but he did not act immediately, and meanwhile he sent to the Senate no less than nine New York appointments which had been agreed upon with Conkling. In spite of Platt's letter, quoted above, he did not wait for his return, and Platt complains of this in his autobiography; but his reason was that on March 21 Conkling sent him a note, expressly releasing him from that necessity. Platt's "request for delay," wrote Conkling, "was that he might personally add his suggestion in behalf of Gen. MacDougall . . . so that if these names were to be sent in you could not be asked to defer doing so because of Mr P's request and absence." So far, Garfield had acted strictly in accordance with the custom of "senatorial courtesy" and the "pledge" to consult.

He did this, moreover, without consulting Blaine. The journal says: "In the evening while we were at dinner Blaine came and expressed great distress at the New York appointments. In one of them I think I have made a mistake & will try to correct it. Many called in the evening. At 10.30 Blaine came & stayed until near 12." Blaine was not the only person alarmed at this apparent surrender to Conkling. A good many telegrams of protest came in. Newspapers of all varieties commented on it as "a complete surrender to the dictation of Senator Conkling" (New York *Times*, March 23). The Philadelphia *Inquirer* remarked (March 23), "It is held thereby that Conkling gains complete control of the federal patronage in New York." The Boston *Herald* pictured his satisfied smile. "He had won, his enemies personal and political were vanquished."

The next day, without a word of warning, Garfield sent to the Senate a group of appointments such as had not been dreamed of by anybody in the United States. General Merritt, the "reform" collector of the port of New York, was nominated Consul-General at London; General Badeau was moved from that position to be minister to Copenhagen, and Cramer, the minister to Denmark, was transferred to Switzerland, where the previous American minister was removed outright. To fill Merritt's place no less a personage than Judge Robertson, leader of the New York Independents in

the state and at Chicago, was nominated. This last appointment was a political bombshell. It struck all factions momentarily dumb with astonishment, which increased as it presently appeared that none of the men concerned had been consulted. To appoint to the most important office in the New York custom house a man who had defied Conkling—a man who was known as a Blaine follower; to remove for that purpose a man who had been installed expressly to give the custom house a reform administration; to shift around two foreign ministers who were protégés of Grant without consulting either of them or Grant himself; to do this, moreover, without any warning to Conkling or Platt—all this made the move look like a political stroke of the boldest character. It was in the highest degree aggressive, almost ruthless, and it challenged opposition from all quarters, from Civil Service Reformers as well as from spoilsmen. It violated at one blow as many different political conventions as it well could.

Not a word of explanation on Garfield's part accompanied this nomination and newspapers and the public were left to their own conjectures to account for it. What happened was that editors and correspondents jumped to the conclusion that the nomination was inspired wholly by Blaine as a blow at Conkling. "The whole program," said the *New York Times* (March 29), "was the work of the 'magnetic' Secretary of State." The *Washington Post* (March 29) spoke of Blaine as "undoubtedly responsible." The *New York Herald* (April 4) declared "every wish and suggestion of Mr. Conkling has been denied and a sharp politician put at the head of the Custom House who will know how to work it for all it is worth against Conkling." The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* asked, "Was James A. Garfield elected President of the United States simply that he might become a willing instrument for the execution of James G. Blaine's private vengeance?"

Conkling himself instantly came to the same conclusion, especially after he discovered from a White House employee that Blaine had spent the evening of March 21 with Garfield. A writer reports him as saying:¹ "Blaine upset the entente

¹ *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 1897, Vol. XXIV, p. 154.

cordiale. Having heard of the proposed arrangement he left his sick-bed and hurried to the White House to protest against its execution. The result was that within forty-eight hours of the interview the nomination of Robertson was sent to the Senate." Soon circumstantial accounts were in print of how Blaine coerced Garfield. One said that "Mr. Blaine, after raving around the Executive office for some time, insisted upon having the nomination made at once. He threatened to resign and smash things generally unless his wishes were acceded to and in order to pacify him the nomination was made."¹

The idea was current among others than Conkling's adherents. "Senators, especially those who had served in the House with the President and his Secretary of State, had no doubt of it. Such a tremendously bold act was entirely foreign to Garfield's character. Nor could it have but one meaning. The man who had split the New York delegation for Blaine was to have his reward and to occupy the place of patronage and power. Men like Senator Frye of Maine knew that it was his act."²

Nevertheless there was and is no evidence for this belief beyond the admitted fact that Blaine spent nearly two hours with Garfield the night before the Robertson nomination was sent in. The unquestionable testimony of Garfield's journal and letters shows that so far from being a sudden impulse it was part of a plan, already matured, for bringing the issue to a definite conclusion early in the game, in case Conkling would accept no equitable division of the appointments. Garfield wrote in his journal, evidently for record purposes: "Mar. 22. Foreseeing the difficulties which attend the affairs of New York, and determined not to be classed as the friend of one faction only, I carried out a plan which I discussed with Judge Folger when he was in Mentor and which he approved. Instead of waiting for the long two-years contest over the New York collectorship which will attend the remainder of General Merritt's term, I appointed Merritt Consul General to London and Judge Robertson Collector

¹ New York *Herald*, May 11.

² Alexander, *History of the State of New York*, Vol. III, p. 470.

of New York. This brings the contest to an early close and fully recognizes the minority element. The change of Badeau from London to Copenhagen may not be pleasant to General Grant, but the transfer of Cramer to Switzerland will be." The allusion in the last sentence was to the fact that Badeau was Grant's former staff officer and was now engaged in writing Grant's biography. Cramer was Grant's brother-in-law.

It will be observed that Blaine's name nowhere appears in connection with the appointment, the only person mentioned as knowing about it in advance being Folger. Garfield speaks of the plan as wholly his own. He emphasized this still more strongly in an important letter to Hinsdale (April 4), which shows not only that it was Garfield's personal policy but that he had carefully thought it out beforehand as a possible step, in case he found Conkling unwilling to coöperate. It also shows that Garfield meant to make it a test case to settle the question of his own headship in the administration and in the party on all questions of executive independence. "It was very natural," he wrote, "that you should think that I have prematurely precipitated a contest with the New York Senator. This is my philosophy of the case. President Grant surrendered New York patronage to Mr. Conkling—defeat in the state was the result. President Hayes gave the majority of the patronage to his [*i.e.*, Conkling's] opposers and the result was not so disastrous but it widened the breach between the opposing wings of the Republican party and made a constant petty warfare between himself and Mr. Conkling in which both sides became unduly irritated. After a careful survey of the whole field I thought that both Presidents had made a mistake by enlisting their influence on one side or the other. I determined therefore to recognize Mr. Conkling very generously and fully. This I did by appointing from the list of his friends the Postmaster General, the Postmaster at New York, the minister to France and filling nine vacancies in the State with persons whom he recommended. To have stopped there would have been regarded as not only a surrender to him but as putting to the sword all those Inde-

pendent Republicans who followed me at Chicago in resisting the unit rule and in advocating the right of individual delegates to the free exercise of their judgment in the Convention. Therefore I determined to recognize the other side in a conspicuous manner. I knew that there lay before me a struggle of a year and a half over Merritt's position. It would have been vacant just when the state of New York would be entering upon the gubernatorial struggle and the appointment of Merritt's successor would have brought the contest in the midst of a great political inflammation of feeling. I thought it better therefore to provide for Merritt in such a manner that he could not consider himself slighted and put in his place an abler man and the leader of the N. Y. Independents. This brings on the contest at once and will settle the question whether the President is registering clerk of the Senate or the Executive of the United States. It is probable that the contest will be sharp and bitter but I prefer to have the fight ended now and the Collectorship of New York settled for the term. Summed up in a single sentence this is the question: shall the principal port of entry in which more than 90% of all our customs duties are collected be under the control of the administration or under the local control of a factional senator. I think I win in this contest and having won, the ground will be cleared around me and Senators will understand my attitude as well as theirs."

It is unfortunate that this letter to Hinsdale could not have been published in April, 1881, for it would have made people see how Garfield's mind worked. There is no reason for supposing he did not mean exactly what he said. He was taking a stand in favor of a fair division of offices between two factions and at the same time asserting his freedom from the custom of "senatorial courtesy." This last point deserves to be dwelt upon, since it was prominent in Garfield's mind for ten years. As early as 1871 he had published a speech in which he had attacked it as a dangerous usurpation. "The power of confirming appointments is rapidly becoming a means by which the Senate dictates appointments. The Constitution gives to the President the initiative in appoint-

ments as it gives the House the initiative in revenue legislation. Evidence is not wanting that both these rights are every year subject to new invasions."¹ In 1875 he had used still stronger language about it.² "Consultation" he regarded as a means of getting information, and not as a euphemistic word for accepting dictation from Senators. He did not propose to be "the registering clerk of the Senate." On the other hand, he had no idea of "attacking" Conkling, or beginning the foundation of a Garfield machine in New York. He had come to a decision on what was fair, and, finding no coöperation from Conkling in the interview of March 20, he decided to go ahead with his own plans. Another man, realizing the nature of the difficulties in such a step, would have taken pains to make his position understood beyond possibility of cavil, and would have been careful to supply his supporters and defenders, in the press and in the Senate, with ample explanations. But Garfield, satisfied in his own mind that what he had done was fair and reasonable, was content to act and let the nomination speak for itself.

First to congratulate him was Blaine, who sent a note worth quoting, since its language is evidently a reflection of Garfield's own ideas and is incompatible with the theory that Blaine suggested the appointment. "Your work of today creates a splendid impression," he wrote. "Your own friends in N. Y. who had waited without a complaint for a single recognition of their great labors for you are amply rewarded. If the gentlemen who had had nine or ten large appointments are growling it only shows their utter unreasonableness and discloses the danger that they would have used *your* administration to crush *your* friends. Treat both sides fairly—and on this line you must be as firm and resolute as though you were fighting Chickamauga over again." That is not the way Blaine wrote about his own plans. The opening phrase about "your work" would never have been employed by him if it was his own plan that Garfield was carrying out.

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. I, p. 698.

² See p. 583.

Garfield watched the newspaper storm and commented tersely in the journal, March 23, "The sensation produced by the nomination was very great but I think the Senate will approve." On the twenty-fourth the New York State Senate, to the general surprise, passed a resolution favoring the confirmation of the Robertson nomination, which, Garfield wrote (March 25), "has given new strength to the position I have taken in New York affairs, although I am confident that there will be a severe contest growing out of the Custom House appointment." But by this time the New Yorkers had rallied sufficiently to take action and a series of semidiplomatic interchanges began. The first step was for James, the Postmaster General, to open up the subject, and then for him, with Conkling, Platt and Arthur, to make a joint solemn protest. Since McVeagh also desired to make an emphatic protest against the appointment of Chandler as Solicitor-General, the two members of the cabinet waited on Garfield together. The journal said: "Mar. 25. At three p.m. James and McVeagh came for a confidential talk. James protested against the appointment of Robertson and said he was regretfully compelled to resign to make his friends understand that he was not a party to the appointment." McVeagh then made a similar statement regarding Chandler. "I gave them to understand," went on Garfield, "that I had meant no discourtesy but had intended to use my own discretion. An appointment for Vice-president, Conkling and Platt but they failed to come." At a later time James said that he acted with McVeagh because each felt that Blaine was at the bottom of the objectionable appointments—Robertson's as well as Chandler's—and they agreed to pool their strength. "At this," said James, "General Garfield in his hearty, affectionate manner, laid his arm around the shoulder of each and said, 'There is no need for that, for I need you two too much. Have Conkling come over this evening. I will see that the members of the Cabinet are present and it will go hard if we do not settle all this matter before we separate.'"¹

¹ Statement of T. L. James to J. A. Garfield, 1889.

Once more Garfield offered the "Stalwarts" a chance to come to an agreement, but Conkling threw it away. The reason that Conkling broke the engagement was simply a fit of anger over a letter from Governor Cornell of New York, whom he had considered a docile supporter, advising him not to oppose the Robertson nomination.¹ James, at the end of his patience with Conkling over this childishness, felt no further hesitation about remaining in office.

Two days later Garfield heard from Conkling through Allison as intermediary, the Senator having recovered from his rage sufficiently to resume indirect negotiations. The journal says: "Mar 27 The appointment of Robertson is likely to be *casus belli*. Senator Allison was here and gave me the substance of a long interview with Senator Conkling. It appears that the *gravamen* of my offense was that I did not consult him about the Robertson appointment. The president is authorized to nominate and did so. A senator considers it a personal affront that he was not personally told of the purpose. I stand joyfully on that issue—let who will fight me." The next day brought further developments. "Mar 28—Senator Platt called and we had a full conversation on the New York appointments. I see no mistake in what I have done *in re* Robertson, unless it be in not having talked with the two senators beforehand. But that would have made no difference in the result." On this same day James, for his New York friends, handed Garfield a written protest, signed by himself, the Vice-President and the two senators. This document dwelt upon the same grievance, namely that the senators had not been given a chance to protest before the nomination was made, and added a charge of bad faith. "We had only two days before this," it said, "been informed from you that a change in the customs office at New York was not contemplated; and quite ignorant of a purpose to take any action now we had no opportunity, until after the nomination to make the suggestion we now present." The "suggestion" was, of course, that in their opinion

¹ Connery, "Secret History of Garfield-Conkling Tragedy," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 1897, Vol. XXIII, p. 156.

Robertson ought not to be appointed to be collector, since it would divide the party.¹

It was now clear on what grounds the "Stalwarts" meant to fight the nomination. They had fastened upon two points regarding each of which they felt that they had the President at a disadvantage; his neglect to "consult" them—which they evidently considered an absolute right on their part—and his having postponed the consideration of removals in the March 20 conversation with Conkling. It is to be observed that nowhere in this protest did they bring forward the "pledge" in the form given in the biographies published after Garfield's death,—that, in addition to announcing he would consult them, he expressly said that he would "do only what was approved by them."² If any such agreement had been made, now, if ever, was the time to bring it forward. There is no reason to suppose that any of these gentlemen would have shrunk from calling Garfield's attention to such a "pledge" if they really thought he had made it; for in the case of the supposed Morton "promise" they had stuck to it with unyielding stubbornness for four months, thrusting it upon Garfield again and again. That, at this juncture, they did not bring it forward, practically proves that it did not exist. All that Garfield ever had said was that he would "consult" them—a remark from which it was quite possible to draw widely differing inferences.

The other point in the protest related to something that Garfield had not thought of sufficient importance to enter in his diary, the remark about the New York custom house. Boutwell said:³ "As Mr. Conkling was leaving he said, 'Mr. President, what do you propose about the collectorship of New York?' The President said, 'We will leave that for another time.' These statements I received from Mr. Conkling." This casual response was seized upon by Conkling as constituting another "promise" which had been violated by the Robertson nomination.

¹ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 154.

² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³ G. S. Boutwell, *Reminiscences of Sixty Years*, Vol. II, p. 273.

It may be regretted, for Garfield's sake, that he did not take greater pains to make his action on this point so punctiliously in keeping with the "consultation" demanded by the two senators that they could have had no chance to talk about bad faith and perfidy and the like. No doubt a rupture was inevitable. After the interview of March 20 with Conkling no other conclusion was possible, for he had announced his unwillingness to have any Independent hold a federal office in New York State. If Garfield had announced to the Senators his intention to nominate Robertson, thereby enabling them to protest, he would either have had to back down before them, or send the nomination knowing in advance that it would be obstinately opposed, so, as he remarked, "it would have made no difference in the result." But when dealing with men of Conkling's type, to whom generosity or magnanimity were unknown, it was the part of worldly wisdom to play the game of politics in flawless "good form." A president less impatient with the whole business of appointments, less eager to brush aside mere formalities and settle things at once on what he considered a fair basis, might easily have managed matters so as to place Conkling patently in the position of dictating, and leave no chance to befog the issue by charges of "discourtesy" or "bad faith." Garfield probably realized this, to some extent, but there is no sign that he took it seriously. His mind was fixed on the large governmental aspect of the matter.

At this juncture there can be no doubt that the anti-Conkling elements feared that Garfield, in his desire for harmony, might consent to some compromise involving a backdown. They well knew his conciliatory attitude, his unwillingness to force an issue to a rupture, his frequent readiness, during his Congressional career, to agree to compromise measures as a solution to difficulties. It was with these doubts in mind that John Hay on March 28 read to Garfield a dispatch from Whitelaw Reid, outlining the probable course to be taken by the Conkling forces and imploring him to stand firm. "I wish to say to the President," Reid concluded, "that in my judgment this is the turning point

of his whole administration, the crisis of his fate. If he surrenders now, Conkling is president for the rest of the term and Garfield becomes a laughing-stock. On the other hand he has only to stand firm to succeed. In one word, there is no safe or honorable way out now but to go straight on. Robertson should be held firm. The least wavering would be fatal." Garfield listened until Hay had finished reading when he tersely remarked, "They may take him out of the Senate head-first or feet-first: I will never withdraw him."¹

Garfield wrote promptly to Reid, stating his position (March 30): "After giving the majority wing of the Republican party almost every place in New York, so that no one failed to see they were generously treated, the President nominated a prominent Republican of unquestioned ability to a place now held by a man whose appointment was resisted by the N. Y. Senator. He considers himself affronted because he was not consulted. It had better be known in the outset whether the President is the head of the government, or the registering clerk of the Senate. That question will be settled by the confirmation or the rejection of Robertson. I understand that efforts are being made to induce Robertson to decline. I hope he will not yield. It is the crucial test of the administration. The course of Platt is extraordinary. He bases it upon the ground that he was not consulted. Suppose he had been? Would he then have voted for Robertson? If yes, on what ground of reason can he now vote no? In either case he would vote, not on the merits of the nominee but upon the wholly irrelevant question of his being consulted." The position of Platt was, in fact, exceedingly awkward. He had specifically promised, in return for the support of the Independents in the senatorial election, not to oppose a "fair share" of patronage for the Independents and was ready to vote to confirm the nomination of Robertson, even for the cabinet.² Hence, in order to stand with Conkling, he was compelled to base his action entirely on the "consultation" quibble. This situation colored his entire treatment of

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

the episode in his autobiography, causing him to misstate facts hopelessly and to twist chronology. As a statement of the case it is absolutely worthless.

As this letter shows, Garfield's fighting spirit, not quickly evoked, was now aroused and he determined to push the matter through. On April 1 he brought it before the cabinet. "After regular business was over I stated to the members present the condition of the New York fight, and received their generous support of my position." The next day he wrote: "Having received last night pretty full details of Mr. Conkling's plan of attack upon my nomination of Robertson, I have taken occasion during the day, to let several senators know that the vote on Robertson's confirmation was a test of friendship or hostility to the administration; and I find a good deal of strong and hearty support among senators who have long been restive under the arrogant domination of the New York Senator. If he assails me he will find it no rose-water war." Following this he secured Sherman's help. "April 3. Had a long ride with Senator Sherman and reviewed the political situation. He agrees to take charge of the fight in the Senate on the New York nomination of collector. Thinks we can confirm Robertson."

The situation in the Senate at this time was such as to complicate matters and prevent an early solution of the problem presented by the Robertson nomination. In it there were thirty-seven Republicans, thirty-seven Democrats, and two men who belonged to neither party. One of them, Davis of Illinois, was prepared to vote so as to aid in organizing the Senate on a Republican basis, but the other, Mahone of Virginia, was not ready to vote with the Republicans unless assured of "recognition" by them. The casting vote of the Vice-President sufficed to elect the Republican "slate" of committees, but when, on March 23, the Republicans cemented their alliance with Mahone by nominating one of his Virginia followers for Sergeant-at-Arms, the Democrats entered upon a filibuster which blocked all action on executive matters throughout the rest of the month and into April. On their part, the Republican Senators were in no hurry to face the necessity of voting on Garfield's nominations and

welcomed the delay as affording them time to work out some compromise that would save the party from an open split. Garfield was compelled to wait until they chose to act. His comment on the Senate situation March 15 shows his lack of self-deception in such matters. "The event of yesterday—the declaration of Mahone that he would not act with the Southern Bourbons—may be the open door to larger consequences in the South. The moral power of the movement is somewhat marred by the apparent advantage to him and to the Republicans which his affiliation brings. The situation makes my policy towards the Republicans of Virginia unusually difficult." On May 29 he outlined for Hay, temporarily in charge of the New York *Tribune*, his own attitude. In the first place he was utterly opposed to any fusion between Republicans and Readjusters as "tainting our party with the flavor of repudiation which would be in every way calamitous." He favored an alliance on the basis of a platform calling for a fair vote and honest count. So far as federal patronage went, he said: "Of course I have no trouble in removing Bourbon Democrats of whom there are plenty in Virginia, but I will not remove Republicans to appoint Mahone men. I shall do enough for Mahone to help him against the Bourbons but not abandon our organization."

As Garfield had foreseen, there now began a steady pressure upon him for a compromise, which should take the form of a withdrawal by both sides; Garfield to recall the nomination of Robertson to the collectorship, Conkling to waive his objections to the appointment of Robertson to some other position in the state. The New York *Sun* announced (April 7), "If Judge Robertson will accept a compromise by withdrawing from the collectorship, no opposition will be made to him for any other position." The journal records a succession of visits from leading Republicans to impress the need for concessions. "April 5—Senator Platt called at eight-thirty and discussed the New York situation. He wants me to withdraw all the New York nominations and then appoint Robertson in place of Woodford to the District Attorneyship. I refused to take the initiative or make any

suggestion of change to Robertson." According to a writer who got his information from Platt and Conkling, James induced Garfield to "promise" that if Woodford, one of the Conkling men nominated for the district-attorneyship, should agree to accept a foreign mission, the nomination of Robertson would be shifted to the vacancy thus created. No sign of any such arrangement appears in Garfield's papers. It is safe to say the "Stalwarts" followed their habit of imputing "promises" where none existed.¹

On April 6 Logan, the leading "306 man" of Illinois, dined at the White House and tried his hand, as the journal says, "de rebus certaminis. . . . Conkling alleged that Robertson is his bitter personal enemy. I summed up the case in reply to allegations; 1. The Robertson appointment is mine, not anothers. 2. The office is national, not local. 3. Having given all the other places to Conkling's friends, he is neither magnanimous nor just in opposing this one friend of mine. He has raised a question of veracity with me and it shall be tried by the Senate." Evidently Garfield meant in this to deny that the Robertson appointment was instigated by Blaine. This language to Logan was the more noteworthy because, just before it, Garfield had been notified by two of Blaine's political supporters that they considered the Robertson appointment dangerous. "Hale and Frye were here this morning," he wrote (April 5); "the latter thinks Conkling makes a very strong case and wishes Robertson would withdraw." This was a clear intimation that Garfield was going to encounter trouble from Senators who disliked Conkling heartily but felt that the affront to "senatorial courtesy" in the Robertson nomination could not be justified. But nothing could shake Garfield's determination.

Failing to move Garfield, Platt endeavored to induce Robertson to take the district-attorneyship instead of the collectorship. This was blocked by the absolute refusal of Robertson to consider any compromise. He wrote Reid: "Under no circumstances will I ask President Garfield to withdraw my nomination . . . nor will I consent to its with-

¹ Connery, in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 1897, Vol. XXIII, p. 155.

drawal . . . as the withdrawal of my name at his instance would make him Conkling's abject slave for the residue of his term."¹ "This," said Reid, in writing to Garfield, "shows how absolutely you are master of the situation. Conkling will every month become more and more powerless. I really believe you have him where there is a chance to make an end of him, and of the corrupt, insolent and bullying elements which he has carried into our politics."

On April 14, Platt having produced no impression, Arthur tried his hand. The journal says: "In the evening Vice-President Arthur called. Long and earnest talk on New York appointments." The only result was deadlock. Garfield reported (to Reid, April 18) that Arthur was trying to alarm him by warning him of party dangers. "The cry which is gaining them some strength here is that the confirmation of Robertson will inevitably defeat the party in New York. Arthur says he knows it will defeat us. I answer, yes, it will defeat us if the leaders determine it shall. Summed up in a word Mr. C asks me to withdraw Robertson to keep the other leaders of the party from destroying themselves. Of course I deprecate war, but if it is brought to my door the bringers will find me at home."

All this time the tension was rising steadily and the language used by the newspapers which sympathized with Conkling grew more and more bitter. Items kept appearing which showed that the writers had had access to Conkling's recollections, dwelling harshly on Garfield's perfidious breaking of "promises" made at the March 20 interview. Their evident purport was to show that complete harmony had reigned at that conference and that no difficulties of any sort would have arisen if Garfield had remained true to his agreement. On the other side, items were printed from time to time setting forth Garfield's intention to "recognize both sides," but no positive personal defense.

The situation had become one of the kind in which Garfield was at a disadvantage. As in 1873, he would not stoop to a public defense of his own honor or veracity. The utmost

¹ Cortissoz, *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, Vol. II, p. 63.

he would do was to permit his intentions to be made known or, under extreme provocation, to issue a correct statement of disputed facts. He simply would not use personalities, nor depart from calm and dignified language. He would accept no challenge to engage in controversy. The furthest he would go appears in an article in the *Philadelphia Press*, April 24, "by authority," in which he told a reporter enough about the interview of March 20 and his subsequent action to deny positively the charges that he was actuated by political motives in nominating Robertson, or violated any promise in so doing.

"It was then definitely stated by the President," ran the interview, "that the wing of the Republican party in New York which Judge Robertson represents should be recognized in him, the only question being as to the place. Upon this he asked Mr. Conkling's advice. Mr. Conkling thought that Judge Robertson himself would recognize the fact that his professional experience had not been of a character to fit him for a prosecuting officer. This suggestion to the President settled Judge Robertson's fate for that place. He was not then mentioned for the Collectorship although it was well understood that he was to have some important place. During this interview a long list of appointments to federal office in New York was scrutinized and Mr. Conkling's preferences consulted and acted upon. The collectorship was not discussed at that time except incidentally. Once during the course of the talk, Mr. Conkling said to the President, 'When are you going to remove Mr. Merritt?' General Garfield replied in substance, 'That matter will be taken up soon.' After the interview and after several nominations had been made in accordance with Mr. Conkling's suggestions, the disposition of Judge Robertson's case forced itself upon the President's mind in accordance with his announced policy of making it manifest at the outset of his administration that all elements of the party were to be recognized. Senator Conkling was not consulted as to this nomination, for the reason that the President thought that the general understanding with Mr. Conkling covered whatever disposition he might make of Judge Robertson. He was therefore

as surprised as anyone else at the bitter opposition it provoked. It was not made with any purpose of antagonizing Mr. Conkling. Indeed it was well understood that none of his appointments were to be considered as rewarding or punishing, and that any such abuse of them would meet his prompt disapproval. This view the President had in mind when he named Judge Robertson for the collectorship and he supposed Mr. Conkling would so understand. He did not intend when he made the nomination, nor does he intend now, that the custom house in New York shall be used as a political machine by Judge Robertson to weaken Mr. Conkling's influence. Indeed he intends to go further and see to it that it is not done. These facts are stated by authority."

This statement, calm and reasonable in the midst of a storm, contained material that ought to have been before the public a month earlier. Issued at that time it would have greatly strengthened Garfield's position as against any attack from the New Yorkers, but coming after the accusations of Conkling and his sympathizers had had the field to themselves for several weeks, it lost a great deal of its effectiveness. Even to his own supporters it was more annoying than satisfactory, for it seemed to be the language of a man who refused to fight even when attacked. It seemed to be trying by protestations of good intentions to placate a man who was beyond the reach of reason or fair dealing. What they wanted was for Garfield to take the aggressive against his defamers.

Garfield's journal shows that behind the scenes he was beginning to exert pressure on the Senate to take action on the nomination. "April 21. Spoke during the day with many Senators concerning the necessity of early action on the nominations." "Apr 26—I have taken hold of the deadlock question and talked with about twenty Senators. I think the caucus will soon take it up. Rumors reach me that a caucus committee is to call on me with a view of harmonizing differences. We will see whether they will venture to dictate my discretion in reference to nominations." He was not misled by this report, for the Senate leaders were not ready to face the dilemma without further efforts to avoid the disagree-

able necessity either of defying the incoming President at the very beginning of his term, or of overriding their colleague in a point where nearly every member of the Senate openly or secretly sympathized with him.

Senator H. L. Dawes, the chairman of this conciliation committee, left a full description of the meeting with Conkling,¹ in which the latter rehearsed his grievances in a speech of two hours and a half. "On that occasion," wrote Dawes, "he surpassed himself in all those elements of oratorical power for which he was so distinguished. I had heard him in all his great efforts since he entered Congress, more than twenty years before, but I had never heard anything which equalled his effort for flights of oratorical power—genuine eloquence, bitter denunciation, ridicule of the dispised faction in New York and contempt for its leader." At the end of the speech, to the consternation of the committee, he uttered an alarming threat. "I now say to you and through you to those whom it most concerns, that I have in my pocket an autograph letter of this President . . . which I pray God I may never be compelled in self-defense to make public; but if that time shall ever come, I declare to you, his friends, he shall bite the dust." "The committee," says Dawes, "was left in a great state of excitement."

On April 29 the contest, hitherto carried on by conversations and newspaper statements, formally began with an interview between the Republican caucus committee and the President. The diary says: "In the evening the committee came to consult on these topics. 1st Virginia Problem, 2nd The importance to the administration of executive sessions, and 3rd the possibility of hurrying on the Senate over the New York nominations. On the first I expressed my willingness to aid an alliance between the Virginia Republicans and Mahone party but not the abandonment of their organization, 2nd that the administration needs the 300 vacancies filled. 3rd that the New York nominations are my best judgment and will not be withdrawn. The committee had been bull-dozed by Senator Conkling."

¹ "Conkling and Garfield," in *Century Magazine*, January, 1894, p. 343.

The account by Dawes of what Garfield said of his motives in this conference¹ coincides exactly with what the latter wrote in his journal and in his letter to Hinsdale; namely, that he refused to "ignore or taboo" either side in the New York factional quarrel and intended to recognize his political obligations to both, arising from the nomination and from the campaign. "He then recounted the pains he had taken," concluded Dawes, "in his attempt to apply these principles to the case in hand; and his failure to enlist cooperation; and said that though compelled to take the course he had pursued unaided by those from whom he had hoped for assistance, he had been guided in it strictly by the principles here indicated."

At this same time Dawes was charged by the committee to discover if possible what the letter was by which Conkling intended to make the President "bite the dust," if driven to it. Evidently the words of Conkling had already been brought to Garfield, for as soon as Dawes spoke, he replied: "Oh, you allude to a letter Conkling is saying that he has of mine and which he represents to be a pretty bad one. I know what it is and have a copy of it." He treated the whole matter lightly and as of no consequence, . . . took the letter from his pocket and handed it to me. Upon perusing it I discovered that it was one of those indiscreet letters, like the Jay Hubbell letters, which he had written during the presidential campaign, aiding the efforts to collect from clerks and other government officials subscriptions to campaign expenses." Dawes urged the President to forestall Conkling by publishing it at once, but Blaine came in at this point. Garfield handed him the letter, remarking, "Here, Blaine, is where I have been slopping over again," and asked his opinion. Blaine's advice was against publication, so nothing was done.

The next day Garfield made his position unmistakable. The journal says: "In the evening Senator Dawes called again from the caucus committee and remained two hours.

¹ "Conkling and Garfield," in *Century Magazine*, January, 1894, p. 344.

I told him there could be no peace by evading the New York contest. I wanted it known soon whether I was the registering clerk of the Senate or the Executive of the Government." Garfield was taking constitutional grounds and was intentionally defying the custom of "senatorial courtesy." It seemed as if in so doing he were furnishing ammunition to Conkling, for many Senators were wholly unprepared to let go their hold on offices, no matter how little they cared for Conkling. On May 2 Dawes called again, with Hawley, to repeat his arguments. But Garfield's obstinacy had now become fixed with immovable tenacity. On May 3 he laid his case before the cabinet. "At cabinet meeting after routine business, I reviewed the conduct of the Senate towards the nominations and the behaviour of Senator Conkling as developed by the Caucus committee, mentioning his threat to disclose my letter to Hubbell asking him to get Brady's help about the campaign. I detailed to them my interview with the caucus committee and said I wanted the aid of the Cabinet to resist the encroachment of the Senate and to secure the confirmation of Robertson. There was a general hearty approval of my course."

At this time things began to move, for, the Republicans, and Readjusters having perfected their alliance, the Senate deadlock was abandoned May 4 and it became possible for action to be taken on all the pending questions. Garfield instantly became aware that the contest was entering upon a new stage. "The caucus has agreed," he wrote, "to consider first treaties, second uncontested nominations, third, before any further business is done an executive session shall be called." Garfield at once saw the tendency of this decision regarding "uncontested nominations." "It may be possible," he wrote, "for Mr. Conkling to have all his New York friends confirmed and let the Senate adjourn without acting on Robertson's case. If I find that is likely to occur, I will withdraw all the New York nominations except Robertson's and await action on that." A few hours later it appeared that precisely the action he conjectured was intended, for one of the New York nominations was confirmed. "I withdrew five of the New York appointments," he recorded May

5. "This will bring the Robertson nomination to an issue. It may end in his defeat but it will protect me against being finessed out of a test."

This was no sudden inspiration on Garfield's part, for something like it had been suggested by Platt on April 5 as the first step in his proposed compromise, while Blaine at about the same time had proposed it for a wholly different reason. The fervent and belligerent note in which the latter urged the step may be quoted as an example of the kind of advice he was giving. "Your chivalric generosity toward Conkling has given him a manifest unfair advantage in the contest. To show your utter unselfishness you sent in the names of all his friends first. . . . He, therefore, securely seizes and holds all the strong points you so liberally gave him and after these are fastened past recall he has all the accidents, delays & complications in the Senate as the weapons wherewith to fight one of your chief & undaunted friends at Chicago. If tomorrow you recall the nominations of Tenney, Woodford, Payn, MacDougall, Tyler, the Albany P.M., the Batavia P.M. & Robertson you will send consternation through the ranks of the Conklingites. Then, when Mr. Conkling has come to his senses . . . you can begin at the other end and send in Robertson's name first and see how Mr. Conkling relishes that. . . . At all events they are all at your mercy and pleasure. . . . I never felt clearer in my life in urging a suggestion than I do in this case. I *know* by inspiration that it will work like a charm. The coup would be complete and crushing."

Although Garfield a month later adopted the action recommended by Blaine, it was not for the purpose of punishing Conkling but simply to force the issue on his right to make an appointment as an executive power under the Constitution. On May 5, while he was waiting to make sure of the Senate's intentions, Blaine sent the following agonized appeal. "I regard this day as possibly the most important of your Adm'n—you can command the situation or you may lose it & I beg you to act worthily of your great character, of your great fame—send a messenger to the Capitol at once to request of some senator that no confirmation be allowed

till you are heard from, this in case your withdrawing message cannot reach there in season. I pray God you may send it at once. The withdrawal of Elmer will put Tom Platt *hors de combat*. I pray you do not hesitate—I think every friend you have in the land will applaud.” On the note is endorsed in Garfield’s hand, “Ansd at 1 p.m. Sent message ½ hour ago—but not Elmer. J.A.G.” He had already acted. Blaine dashed back this note: “My Dear President Glory to God Victory is yours, sure & Lasting. It was wise to leave Elmer in—it will widen the breach between Conkling & Platt. I did not think of that.” Of course Blaine was wrong in his inference as to the retention of Elmer. Garfield’s appointment of Elmer was on James’s recommendation, and had no connection with Conkling’s March 20 list.¹

This brought matters to a square decision. The Senators could not avoid choosing. Conkling was face to face with the issue that he had seemed determined to force ever since the nominating convention of 1880. Garfield’s conduct pained the conservatives. The same evening he says, “nine senators called, most of them to deplore the contest and expressed the hope that I would do something to avoid it. I told them my reasons for the withdrawal and expressed the hope that action would be had on Robertson’s case.”

The effect of this move was to electrify all the public that had been supporting Garfield against the attacks of the “Stalwarts.” It showed for the first time that Garfield had the power of aggressive action and brought forth a shout of delight. The *Baltimore American* (May 6) headed an editorial “At Last.” “President Garfield has answered the question ‘Who is president?’ He has answered it in language which the whole Republican party will approve and which every man of every party that respects pluck will applaud.” “Evidently Mr. Garfield has made up his mind to be president,” commented the *Philadelphia Enquirer*. “The President has at last hit the Bull’s eye,” said the *Washington Post*. “In taking this bold step,” said the *New York Mail and Express*, “the President has proved that his courage is

¹ See later, p. 1157.

equal to his amiability, and thus removed the only fear that has caused any anxiety among his friends." The presidential mail also was crowded with approving letters and telegrams. "My Dear Sir, Stick—The Constitution, the Lord God and the People are with you," wrote A. N. Pratt from Bryan, Ohio. "It begins to look *at last*," wrote R. B. Hoover, "as if we have a chief executive with a will of his own and one around whom the young and vital elements of the Republican party can rally." "Hold the fort," telegraphed J. Medill from Chicago." "Better resign to his henchman Arthur and go back to Mentor than degrade the presidency by succumbing to the usurping boss." On May 6 Garfield recorded, "The withdrawal of the New York appointments has brought me vigorous responses from many quarters and I think shows that the public do not desire the continuance of boss rule in the Senate." He wrote to a number of persons at this time, explaining and restating his position. To John Hay, for example, Garfield made this observation on May 8. After explaining that he withdrew all the names but Robertson's because that was the one that involved the issue, he said: "People are constantly saying Garfield and Conkling should compromise their quarrel. If it were a difference between two individuals there would be some sense in such advice. But the one represents a whole independent function of the government. The other is $\frac{1}{76}$ of $\frac{1}{2}$ of another independent branch of the government, with which compound vulgar fraction the President is asked to compromise. If this demand is acceded to, its effect upon the independence of the executive is too plain for comment."

On the other side, Garfield's action drove the sympathizers with Conkling to fury. Such papers as the New York *Herald*, the New York *Sun*, and the "Stalwart" press of the "up-state" cities broke into open vituperation. Dana, in the *Sun*, reveled in the opportunity to paint the President as a treacherous weakling, helpless in Blaine's hands, and deserving only contempt for his base subserviency. A picture of Conkling's own state of mind at that moment was given in an article published years later by J. L. Connery, editor of the New York *Herald*, who was summoned to Washington

to confer with Arthur and Conkling and assist in the attack on Garfield.¹ When he was brought into the presence of the angry senator, Conkling rehearsed his grievances for him alone, in a long impassioned speech, and Connery, although well acquainted with what he called this "extraordinary, almost ludicrous propensity for orating," could not help being impressed. "This summing up of his case against Blaine, Robertson and Garfield," he said, "surpassed anything of his former private orations." It was the same oration, apparently, that he delivered before the Senate caucus committee and still earlier to Garfield alone at the Riggs House.

The gist of Conkling's eloquent tirade was that Garfield had absolutely no moral right to "reward" the New York men who had refused to obey the instructions of the state convention and had voted against Grant at Chicago in 1880. "Reward! Reward!" shouted Conkling scornfully, "reward, sir, for treacherously betraying a sacred trust!" Furthermore, in view of the efforts made by Conkling for the Republican ticket, it was "base ingratitude" on Garfield's part to nominate anyone who was unfriendly to him. In addition, he alluded to the "pledges" made by Garfield at New York at the Fifth Avenue conference. And finally he repeated the charge that Garfield's behavior in the Robertson case had been taken after a distinct understanding had been reached that no such independent action would be taken. But beneath all lay Conkling's conviction that the whole affair was a personal contest between him and Blaine with Garfield a mere cat's-paw. "It was quite evident," said Connery,² "that both Garfield and Robertson were minor offenders, in the senator's judgment, compared to Blaine, whom he recognized as the adroit and unscrupulous cause of the President's hostile attitude. He charged that it was Blaine who had instigated the President in all the attacks upon the 'Stalwart,' it was Blaine who pestered the President day and

¹ "Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 145-162.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

night about the necessity of crushing Conkling, and who had infused backbone into the President whenever the slightest sign of limpness appeared. It was Blaine who had talked Garfield into nominating Robertson for collector, well knowing that the act would be looked upon as an intolerable insult to Conkling, and that it would give the upper hand to the 'Half Breeds,' who were but a fraction of New York's Republican hosts."

Arthur's position was similar. "Arthur told me," said Connery,¹ "that the Senator was forced by the President's weak truckling to Secretary Blaine and his tortuous methods in dealing with the New York patronage to lay the whole case before the public. 'Garfield has not been square, nor honorable, nor truthful with Conkling,' said Arthur in so many words. 'It is a hard thing to say of a President of the United States, but it is, unfortunately, only the truth. Garfield, spurred by Blaine, by whom he is easily led, has broke every pledge made to us; not only that, but he seems to have wished to do it in the most offensive way.'"

On May 9 the matter came to a head in the Republican Senate caucus. Garfield noted in the journal: "Edmunds moved to postpone action on Robertson until December. Conkling supported motion in a long speech." The substance of what he said appeared in full in many newspapers, giving, for the first time, the complete statement of his case. Two days later (May 11) Connery published in the New York *Herald* what Garfield called "an ugly assault . . . evidently inspired by Conkling," and which was in fact to a large degree a reproduction of the private oration the latter had given Connery, as well as his speech to the caucus. Without quoting at length these angry and abusive productions, it is worth while to summarize from them precisely what Conkling's position was. In the first place, the Fifth Avenue pledges were explained. The abstract of the caucus speech (*Cincinnati Gazette*, May 10) said: "Mr. Conkling stated with great emphasis that General Garfield had made pledges with respect to the patronage of New York which

¹ "Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 146.

he had violated. . . . In the course of his speech he read two letters received from Mr. Garfield during the campaign, urging him to take part in it. The concluding portion of one of these letters is the one upon which Conkling relies to sustain his statements that the President in effect placed the patronage or the greater portion of the patronage of New York at his disposal. The passage . . . stated that he should receive different treatment from that which he had received under the Hayes administration." The *Herald* article of May 11 went further and, in language evidently derived from Platt, stated that "the promise was given by General Garfield in an equally clear and emphatic way that the wishes of the state organization in all the appointments should be fully consulted and that their advice and recommendation should govern him in all he did. A memorandum of these agreements was made at the time." This is the only place in which this version of the "pledge" has been noticed during Garfield's lifetime. None of these alleged documents have ever been published, nor do any copies of such letters as Conkling described exist among the Garfield papers. It is manifest, further, that, at bottom, Conkling had nothing more precise to base his claim upon than Garfield's oft-repeated assurance that he was not going to continue Hayes's methods.

In the second place, Conkling positively asserted that at the March 20 conference he had agreed with Garfield to draw up a "*projet*" for the proper official recognition of the Independents. "Mr. Conkling," said the *Herald* article, "agreed to propose a plan or a number of plans for him." "At the time when the nomination of Robertson was sent to the Senate he [Conkling] was engaged in an attempt to arrange a distribution of the offices of the State in a manner which would recognize the Robertson faction and be satisfactory to the administration." That Garfield understood the situation in any such way as this is unbelievable. It is, of course, possible that Conkling, after the meeting may have considered a plan, but it is quite impossible that Garfield knew that he was so doing. It is perfectly evident

from the words of the journal¹ that so far from feeling that he had agreed with Conkling to arrange offices for the Independents, he was under the impression that Conkling would consent to nothing short of his "abandoning" them. If he had actually succeeded in getting Conkling to draft a plan for "recognizing" Robertson, he would have hailed it as the solution of all his troubles and would have given it a prominent place in the journal. In fact, the whole history of the United States might have been different. When it is considered that Conkling made this statement seven weeks after the conference and under circumstances that tempted him to throw as much blame as possible on Garfield, and that no glimmering of any idea of such an agreement appears in anything that Garfield or Conkling himself wrote at the time, it simply cannot be accepted as authentic.

Finally, and fundamentally, Conkling explained why he objected to having Robertson in the custom house. It all went back to the Chicago convention. He read a great many telegrams and letters to show that Robertson had acted the traitor at Chicago. "Mr. Conkling said he had no objection to the recognition of Judge Robertson or other members of the so-called Independent element; but he did not desire to have Judge Robertson assigned to the greatest office in the state. Whatever might be said to the contrary, if he should be made Collector of Customs, he would organize the Custom House as a political machine and direct its energies against Mr. Conkling. He was willing to go half way and more too. He would be content to have Judge Robertson appointed to any of the offices in the State save that of Collector of the Port or to any office outside the state. . . . Mr. Conkling claimed that, under all the circumstances, the nomination of Robertson was a deliberate insult to himself."

Against this the Senate caucus committee repeated Garfield's words,² containing, be it observed, a distinct disclaimer of Blaine's influence. "The President said to them that he had not nominated Robertson to please or displease any

¹ See p. 1104.

² New York *Herald*, May 16.

man in or out of New York. He had named Robertson because he desired to recognize the services of the men who had made his nomination at Chicago possible; that he had made it after mature deliberation, coolly, calmly, conscientiously and he proposed to have it acted upon by the Senate inasmuch as it was unexceptionable. He told them too that if the nomination were confirmed as he was informed it would be, he would personally instruct Judge Robertson to recognize the existence of no faction in the Republican party of New York in the administration of the Custom House. Conkling sneered audibly when he heard the instructions which Garfield proposed to give Robertson."

By this time it was generally recognized that the nomination was sure to be ratified. Even the New York *Herald*, which daily denounced Garfield, was compelled to print (May 12): "A Republican Senator said this evening, 'There is not the least doubt that if Robertson's name comes before the Senate, he will be confirmed and by a large Republican majority. At the same time it is equally true that there is scarcely a Republican Senator but would be glad to be relieved from voting for the confirmation.'" On May 10 Garfield noted in the journal, "At the caucus of the Republican senators, Edmunds' resolution was withdrawn to avoid defeat, and a resolution unanimously adopted delaying action temporarily in hopes an adjustment can be made."

It was while matters were thus in suspense, with the interest of the entire country focused upon the Senate chamber, that Garfield wrote what was perhaps the best letter in the whole controversy, a letter to Ex-President Grant. The former President had broken a silence of several months by writing, on April 24, an angry protest to Garfield against the Robertson nomination. Accepting in full the idea that the Senators in any state were the official representatives of the party, he said: "To nominate a man to the most influential position within the gift of the President in their state, without consulting them, would be an undeserved slight. To select the most obnoxious man to them, in the State, is more than a slight. . . . I am disposed so far as I am concerned, to ignore, if I cannot forget, all wrongs perpetrated against

me personally, for the general good. But insults and wrongs against others for the crime of having supported me I do feel and will resent all that it is in my power to resent. . . . I do claim, that I ought not to be humiliated by seeing my personal friends punished for no other offence than their friendship and support." The singular confusion of mind which led Grant to feel that the nomination of Robertson was an effort to punish Conkling and Platt for having supported him was as manifest as the painful emotion of the writer.

Garfield's reply to this letter was a masterpiece of patient and kindly pleading. Too long to quote in full, it is worth while to reproduce the passages where he dealt courteously and yet firmly with the unwarrantable conclusions drawn by Grant. "You say that success cannot be achieved by giving the administration over to the settlement of other people's private grievances. You do me great injustice to suppose that I am capable of permitting such use of the powers entrusted to me. I have no thought of making any appointment to injure you. While I heartily agree with you when you say that you 'ought not to be humiliated by seeing your personal friends punished for no other offence than their friendship and support,' I am sure you will agree with me that worthy and competent men should not be excluded from recognition because they opposed your nomination at Chicago. . . . I feel bound, as you did when President, to see to it that local quarrels for leadership shall not exclude from recognition men who represent any valuable element in the Republican party. It is my purpose to be just to all." He concluded the letter with expressions of friendship and respect, alluding to Grant's support in the campaign. "My heart warms generously in response to any request or desire of yours. In this connection I may say that I shall be glad if I find myself able to carry out your wishes in reference to Gen. Badeau. Be assured that whatever concerns your happiness and prosperity will always be a matter of sincere interest to me." Garfield wrote of this correspondence in his journal (May 17): "I have answered a very remarkable letter from Gen. Grant. Rumors are in the

papers that his will be published. If so my reply shall appear. He seems to have forgotten that he is only one citizen, & hence is unconsciously insolent. I have not answered him sharply, but plainly & I think conclusively."

Grant did not print his own letter but gave out a statement of what it contained. On this Garfield commented to Cox (May 22): "The unmanly course of Grant in writing a letter to me & then giving its substance to the public in a letter to Jones, so as to keep from the public his letter to me & my answer, is so unworthy that I will not further characterize it." On May 31 he wrote another letter to Grant, correcting, without any sign of annoyance, an error of statement made by Grant in his public letter to Jones. This letter is endorsed in Garfield's hand, "Not sent, withheld upon reflection." He probably felt that Grant was too angry and bitter to take anything calmly.

It is to be observed that Grant fully assumed that the Robertson appointment was Blaine's work. "Here," writes Badeau,¹ "comes in a singular phase of his anger. Although Grant had been extremely disgusted at Blaine's introduction into the Cabinet, and though he certainly attributed the subsequent course of Garfield to the influence of Blaine, I never thought his soreness so great toward the Secretary of State as toward the President. He not only looked upon Garfield as responsible, but he felt that it was Garfield whom he had obliged, and who should have remembered the obligation. . . . I never heard him speak of the Minister as bitterly as he did of the President." A letter of Grant to Badeau, dated May 7, 1881, fully bears out this analysis. Among other things, Grant said, in reference to Garfield's supposed subservience to Blaine: "Garfield has shown that he is not possessed of the backbone of an angle-worm. I hope his nominations may be defeated."²

Then on May 16 came a sudden stroke on the other side. The journal said: "At twelve Senators Conkling and Platt tendered their resignation as Senators, a very weak attempt

¹ Adam Badeau, *Grant in Peace*, p. 344.

² *Ibid.*, p. 534.

at the heroic. If I do not mistake, it will be received with guffaws of laughter. They appeal to a legislature which they think is already secured. Even in this they may fail. They have wounded the self-love of their brother senators and may lose by it. . . . Their letter to Governor Cornell, giving their reasons for resigning, . . . is a weak attempt at masquerading as injured innocents and Civil Service reformers. They are neither. I go on without disturbance. Having done all I fairly could to avoid a fight I will fight to the end."

This abrupt ending of the contest was probably due to Platt, whose situation was intolerable, in view of his election promises regarding Robertson, and who, according to his own story, first suggested to Conkling that the easiest way to obtain vindication was to resign and secure reelection.¹ The letter of resignation,² laughed at by Garfield, recited the facts of the Robertson nomination after the senators "had been told only a few hours before that no removals in the New York offices were soon to be made or even considered, and had been requested to withhold the papers and suggestions bearing on the subject." No mention whatever was made of any pledge but the underlying assumption running through the letter was that the President had no right to take any steps whatever regarding New York offices without consulting the Senators in advance and receiving their "suggestions."³ If Garfield had really, in the presence of four witnesses, promised to make no nomination without the approval of the Senators, it seems inconceivable that they should not have pilloried him in this letter for his perfidy.

With the departure of the two Senators, all opposition to the Robertson nomination collapsed and on May 18 it was confirmed, as predicted. Garfield commented in the journal: "This leaves Conkling's attitude ridiculous. His row is with the Senate equally with me." His next step was one which completely disproves the charge that he was act-

¹ T. C. Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 152.

² *Annual Cyclopedic*, 1881, p. 694.

³ Platt, *Autobiography*, p. 152.

ing under Blaine's dictation or starting an anti-Conkling machine in New York. The journal says: "Sent in all the old New York nominations except Payn and Tyler, thus maintaining the consistency of the administration. Much feeling because I did not send all anti-Conkling men in." "I was greatly tempted," wrote Garfield to Cox (May 22), "to fill the five vacancies with anti-Conkling men, but on the whole I thought it best not to bend from the course I had started upon—to recognize fairly both wings of the party." This action, in carrying out an agreement made with Conkling two months before, in spite of all that had happened since March 20, drove Blaine to desperation, for it represented a sort of political idealism with which he had not an atom of sympathy. "Pardon my intense earnestness," he wrote in a hasty note. "Nobody can beat you, my dear Mr. President, excepting yourself. Nobody can raise the cause of Conkling except you. I *fear you have done it*. Some blunders you know are worse than crimes. I fear this is one." Garfield was undisturbed.

The Senate acted promptly on the pending nominations, ratifying all but that of Chandler, and adjourned the next day. Garfield had won the fight. "This is a great relief," he commented in the diary (May 20); "all the New York nominations have been confirmed and the war of Conkling vs the administration has passed the first stage successfully for me. It was not of my seeking, but I think he sees by this time that he has undertaken a difficult task. I believe I have been strengthened in the public judgment and support." In letters to Hayes and J. D. Cox (May 22) Garfield freely expressed his opinion of the importance of the battle thus won. "The Conkling war," he wrote to Cox, "has now reached the serio-comic stage and if our friends in N. Y. have the requisite sense and pluck they can end his hateful career as a politician."

In less than ten days from the time he wrote this letter, Garfield received convincing evidence of the completeness of his victory. Instead of receiving the expected triumphant vindication by reelection at the hands of the New York legislature, Conkling and Platt discovered that their resignation

had ruined their prestige in their own party. Garfield noted in the journal, May 31, that in the Republican caucus "Conkling received just one-third of the Republican votes of the two houses in Albany; Platt 29—six less than Conkling. And this is the 'vindication' he appealed for! I do not pursue him to New York, but I will resist the spirit of Bossism wherever it assails me." For all his hearty contempt for the disappointed boss and his follower, Garfield was anxious to avoid even the appearance of any personal connection with the New York legislative contest. On May 28 he referred to himself as "only an interested spectator."

With the Republicans unable to unite, the New York legislature went into a deadlock over the Senatorial elections that remained unbroken for weeks. On June 9 Garfield again commented: "Conkling, who was always inclined to think some one was trying to 'humiliate' him, has succeeded in inflicting measureless humiliation on himself. Suicide is the chief mode of political death, after all." To Hayes (June 8), after carefully explaining his attitude: "It is not pleasant to begin with a storm but there was no honorable way to avoid it, and I shall hope to see clearing weather by-and-by. The attitude of Gen. Grant is most surprising. If he follows up the spirit of his letter to Jones, he will aggravate the quarrel and perhaps injure the party; but he will very seriously injure himself. Indeed he has done so already. It is a pity that our friends in Albany do not unite on candidates. They could soon settle the N. Y. problem in that way." The New York deadlock continued through June, with Conkling and Platt unable to gain a single vote from their opponents within the party. On July 1 Platt accepted defeat and withdrew his name, but Conkling could not bring himself to do the same, although by that time it was generally recognized that under no circumstances could he regain the seat he had resigned. His political ruin was manifest.

The interest of contemporary and subsequent writers in this affair has led to a mass of comment and criticism, most of which assumes that Conkling was right in laying the Robertson nomination entirely to Blaine's influence. But it has been already shown how Garfield in taking this step

described it as his own policy, and how Blaine, in writing to him about it, took the same tone.¹ Garfield's journal has also been quoted (April 6) as saying, "The Robertson appointment is mine, not another's." In addition, he made sundry comments after the conclusion of the Senatorial contest which emphasized his own exclusive responsibility. On May 25 he wrote in the journal: "I am sorry Blaine has gone to New York. It gives occasion for a faction there to transfer the controversy to Conkling and Blaine." A few days later he wrote to Nichol, then in New York, a letter evidently intended to be used (May 29), "The attempt to shift the fight to Blaine's shoulders is as weak as it is unjust."

Of course Blaine took the liveliest interest in the contest and threw all his influence against any compromise and in favor of open fighting. He made long and fairly frequent calls on Garfield and wrote a profusion of letters and notes, constantly urging him to take aggressive action against the "Stalwarts"; but what the evidence goes to show is that he found his pugnacity and impetuosity foiled by Garfield's cool and deliberate habit of making up his own mind. He first urged the withdrawal of the "Stalwart" appointments as early as April 1, but Garfield would not act until the necessity was forced upon him by the Senate. After that he demanded that Garfield turn out all Conkling's supporters but failed not only to induce him to do so, but also to prevent him from renominating all but two of the original list agreed upon with Conkling March 20. No trace of his supposed "domination" can be found.

If Garfield was his own master in this affair and needed no "stiffening" from the start, one is justified in judging his action on the basis of the reasons he himself assigned, political, administrative and—to a degree—constitutional. He was actually trying to regain, for the President, through a conspicuous act on his part, the recognition of the right to a proper discretion in the nomination of important civil officials. It is quite true that the political motive, to recognize

¹ See p. 1110.

his own supporters in the New York Republican party, was equally important in his eyes, giving that double character which is rarely absent from administrative acts of this sort. It was this last aspect of the affair which prevented him from receiving any support from Civil Service Reformers, since in their eyes, he was fighting, not for their cause but merely for the right of the President to exercise discretion in connection with the spoils system. "Garfield cannot claim any moral advantage," said the *Boston Herald* on May 19, "because he recognizes the spoils system as much as Conkling does." What particularly displeased them was the removal of Merritt, a wholly efficient collector, to make room for Robertson. Ex-President Hayes, who had appointed Merritt, expressed strong disapproval. Of Conkling and Platt he wrote in his diary: "They make a strong point in claiming that to remove Merritt is a violation of the President's principles as laid down in his inaugural message and of all sound principles on the subject. The capital mistake is to attempt to build up an administration or a party by the use of office as patronage."¹ It is a trifle amusing, after this, to find that Hayes in spite of his Civil Service principles, went so far at the time as to advise Garfield to proscribe all "Stalwart" officeholders. "My sympathies," he wrote (May 7), "are altogether with you in your contest with 'the courtesies.' . . . I am sure the people are with you in the conflict, and I would in your place push it to the extent of giving nothing to any man who now sustains Conkling." The two men had scruples about different things.

The attitude of Godkin and the *Nation* indicates how little Garfield's ideals of fairness and of constitutional discretion interested the Independents, for the main thing in his eyes, the fight he was waging against "senatorial courtesy," was ignored and his inconsistency in urging a fixed tenure of offices and then removing Merritt two years before the end of his term was the one thing harped upon. On March 31 the *Nation* remarked that the Robertson and Chandler appointments "clearly betray the hand of Blaine."

¹ Williams, *Life of R. B. Hayes*, Vol. II, p. 362.

April 21 it said that Garfield had killed his chances of getting a Civil Service law from Congress by the removal of Merritt. On May 26 it said again of Robertson, "His appointment was made on Boss principles and (so far as appears) on no others, and again, to all appearances by a Maine Boss instead of a New York Boss."

The *Nation* paid no attention to the charges of ingratitude and perfidy against Garfield nor did it show at any time an unfriendly attitude. Godkin merely felt that Garfield was attempting a hopeless thing, to conciliate men who would accept only submission. On May 12 he said, "He has been in office now for two months trying to restore 'harmony' and satisfy 'claims' and recognize 'wings' and 'sections' by making appointments without regard (or with only secondary regard) to fitness, and he has simply produced deadlock and confusion and disappointment among politicians and disgust among the taxpayers." It was a case where Garfield's intentions, however fair and honest, were almost wholly obscured by the political status of the man chosen to represent the Independents. If he had selected almost any one from New York except Robertson, he would have stood a better chance of carrying conviction when he spoke of the appointment as nonpolitical. His concern for vindicating the right of the executive could not help seeming subordinate to his desire to pay a political debt.

It is interesting to quote Blaine's judgment on this affair in his "Eulogy," for it coincides exactly with the evidence of Garfield's letters and journal, and differs utterly from what would have been Blaine's own statement of the situation and the issues at stake. "From the beginning to the end of the controversy he so much deplored, the President was never for one moment actuated by any motive of gain to himself or of loss to others. Least of all men did he harbor revenge, rarely did he even show resentment, and malice was not in his nature. There was not an hour . . . when the President would not gladly, for the sake of restoring harmony, have retraced any step he had taken, if such retracing had merely involved consequences personal to himself. The pride of consistency, or any supposed sense of humiliation that might

result from surrendering his position had not a feather's weight with him. No man was ever less subject to such influences from within or from without. But after most anxious deliberation and the coolest survey of all the circumstances, he solemnly believed that the true prerogatives of the Executive were involved in the issue which had been raised, and that he would be unfaithful to his supreme obligation if he failed to maintain in all their vigor the constitutional rights and dignities of his great office. In all the bearings of the subject, the President was content in his mind, justified in his conscience, immovable in his conclusions."¹

Purely as a matter of tactics it may be contended that the affair might have been better handled. A more skillful manager could easily have prepared the issue in such a way as to make Conkling visibly and conspicuously the aggressor, thereby depriving him of such advantage as he claimed, for a time, under the practice of "senatorial courtesy." If the handling of patronage were the sole business of presidents, Garfield might be adjudged, as several writers have said, not especially well fitted for the task. No one would contend that his talents lay in that direction. But this is to be observed; that whatever tactical shortcomings Garfield may have displayed, he proved beyond question that he had the power of deciding on a policy, the ability to hold absolutely firm to it and the will power to compel the Senate to yield to his determination. When it is realized that every member of his party in the Senate sympathized with Conkling and Platt on their right to be "consulted," it is not too much to say that no President ever won a more striking personal triumph. A cartoon in *Puck* (May 18, 1881) well symbolizes the surprise with which the political world, accustomed to see in Garfield only a conciliatory legislative leader, recognized this unexpected driving power. Standing in the midst of a group of astounded archbishops, cardinals and ecclesiastics with the faces of Arthur, Conkling, Logan, Platt and others, Garfield was shown in a cardinal's robes throwing away crutches labeled "Conciliation" and "Weak-

¹ "Eulogy," pp. 50-52.

ness," in the character of Sixtus V, who "ingratiated himself with all" and "feigned great feebleness," but who, when elected Pope, "threw away his crutches, lifted his head and made the place ring."

CHAPTER XXIX
THE BEGINNING OF ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICIES

1881

IF the victory over Conkling and Platt had been the only thing accomplished by Garfield's administration it would have been a greater achievement than falls to the lot of most Presidents within the first months. But during these weeks of deadlock and vituperation, Garfield and his cabinet had been engaged on tasks which under other circumstances would have commanded popular interest and even stirred enthusiasm. Since it is upon these beginnings of executive policy and not solely upon the merits of the Robertson contest that the promise and the performance of Garfield's brief presidency should be judged, it is fitting that they be treated together, apart from the furious political controversy which has already been followed to its culmination.

It is interesting to observe the emphatic compliments which Blaine paid to Garfield's executive capacity. "From the very outset," he said in the "Eulogy,"¹ "he exhibited administrative talent of a high order. He grasped the helm of office with the hand of a master. In this respect, indeed, he surprised many who were most intimately associated with him in the Government, and especially those who had feared that he might be lacking in the executive faculty. His disposition of business was orderly and rapid. His power of analysis, and his skill in classification enabled him to dispatch a vast mass of detail with singular promptness and ease. His Cabinet meetings were admirably conducted. His clear presentation of official topics on which discussion was invited, his quick decision when all had been heard, combined

¹ P. 44.

to show a thoroughness of mental training as rare as his natural ability, and his facile adaptation to a new and enlarged field of labor."

In the record of the administration there is much strongly to corroborate Blaine's opinion, but before dealing with the favorable aspects of these opening months, it will be well to consider the one field of executive action in which Garfield's success was most open to question. In the matter of appointments to office a problem confronted him which is always the first to meet an incoming president but which circumstances combined to make exceptionally awkward at this time. In the first place, there was a universal demand from the professional party workers and managers that the efforts at Civil Service Reform which had characterized the Hayes administration should be abandoned and the spoils system reinstated in full operation. It was not the New York "Stalwarts" alone who insisted that Garfield should "consult" Senators, Representatives and organization men before making appointments, but the whole membership of "the machine." In the second place, Garfield had felt compelled to assure these men, in his letter of acceptance, that he would not follow Hayes's methods but would "consult" them, and this was taken to be an announcement of his intention to reinstate the system, as indicated by newspaper editorials, letters of Washington correspondents and cartoons. On the other hand the Civil Service Reform ideal was widespread in the country and very many newspapers were ready to denounce unsparingly any reversion to Grant's methods, at their head the sharp-tongued Godkin of the *Nation*.

Garfield's personal attitude on this subject was the outgrowth of several influences. To begin with, he had his own habits of eighteen years to guide him, his customary method of handling spoils in the nineteenth district by trying to find the best man selected by the Republicans of a given locality. He had relied upon Austin, and Judge Kinsman, and Fitch, and the Steeles, and Converse, and Hall, and the rest of his political friends and upon "leading men" in every town, and had succeeded in furnishing good postmasters and the like. He had taken pains to recognize all elements in

his district and to keep offices distributed. What more natural than that he should attempt to do the same thing with offices over the whole United States? In addition, Garfield had a long record of speeches and votes favorable to Civil Service Reform, and while he had criticised Hayes's methods of installing it by executive order, he was thoroughly committed to securing an amelioration of the situation through legislation. He had said as much in his letter of acceptance and he repeated the recommendation in his inaugural. "The civil service can never be placed on a satisfactory basis until it is regulated by law. For the good of the service itself, for the protection of those who are entrusted with the appointing power against the waste of time and obstruction to the public business caused by the inordinate pressure for place, and for the protection of incumbents against intrigue and wrong, I shall at the proper time, ask Congress to fix the tenure of the minor offices of the several Executive departments, and to prescribe the grounds upon which removals shall be made during the term for which the incumbents have been appointed."¹ Pending such legislation, there was no inconsistency in his mind in continuing to use the spoils system, provided always that he tried to use it so as to secure good results in the character of the men appointed and in the "harmony" resulting from his recognition of party claims. What he did not intend to do was to surrender any of his executive discretion to any party leader. On this point he was immovable and the outcome was the embittered contest with Senator Conkling just described, which resulted in the complete defeat of the "Stalwarts" who ventured to challenge him.

In no other case did Garfield encounter any such opposition to his policies, but the lack of open opposition did not mean that he found the question of appointments a simple one. On the contrary, it was the one overwhelming burden of the opening weeks of his term and it continued unabated to the end. His journal shows that immediately after the inauguration the office seekers descended upon him like a

¹ *Works of James A. Garfield*, Vol. II, p. 794.

plague of locusts, permeating the crowds of sightseers and visitors. "These callers," he wrote, "were pleasant kind people who wished to see me and shake hands before going home. But the Spartan band of disciplined office-hunters who drew papers on me as highwaymen draw pistols were the men with whom I had to wrestle like a Greek." In another place he wrote, "(Mar 7) The core of these crowds is the indurated office seeker who pursues his prey with the grip of death." Some of them affected to bully the new executive, and found that even the mild-tempered Garfield could flame up. "Mar 9—A whirl of people who were exigent and strenuous beyond anything yet. I kept my temper without flaw except once, when a Southern Republican demanded to know whether it was to be a stalwart administration, whether Democrats were to be preferred or not, etc. I told him I declined to be lectured or to have my Republicanism questioned, and he left rather sooner than he intended to."

This first rush of office seekers continued for several days, and it was not until March 21 that Garfield took the situation sufficiently in hand to make a rule that he would see "only members of the Government and Congressmen until twelve, then the general public until one." Meanwhile he had been driven nearly to desperation in trying to operate the spoils system. It was not, of course, a wide sweep. Garfield does not appear to have begun by removing Hayes's or Grant's appointees simply to make places. The offices concerned were mainly those made vacant by death or resignation, but since they were few the competition was unusually severe. The first mention of appointments appears on March 12. "Made perhaps twenty-five appointments, mostly Post Masters." "March 14—Sent in a great many nominations of Post Masters, Also Stanley Mathews for the Supreme Court, and Don A Pardee for the 5th Circuit." These last two appointments deserve note. Mathews had been a candidate for a Supreme Court vacancy since the autumn, when he had declined to contest the Ohio senatorship on this ground. Doubtless Garfield felt this was politically necessary. As for Pardee, it was a clear case of giving a position to his old war friend and fellow officer. But Garfield hated

the whole business. "I must resist a very strong tendency to be dejected and unhappy at the prospect which is offered by the work before me." "The contests between personal interests are very hateful to me," he confided in his journal (March 14). "I love to deal with doctrines and events. The contests of men about men I greatly dislike. Perhaps I shall feel better by and by." "Mar 16—It will cost me some struggle to keep from despising the office seeker. Determined to retire at ten but could not sleep until far past midnight. More sense of annoyance and wrong than I have yet experienced. Vexed with the thought that I am wholly unfit for this sort of work."

Garfield's self-judgment, while severe, undoubtedly had some justification. During all his service in Congress he never sought power through the dispensing of offices; and in spite of his eighteen years' experience he had acquired no liking for office-broking nor any political habits that would now be useful. It will be recalled that he turned over to the inhabitants of communities the selection of post-masters, and tried in all other cases to get satisfactory men, rather than to build up a machine. Above all, he hated the element of personal dealings and choice, and sought positions for constituents and friends as a matter of reluctant necessity.

Now when he became President he was left with nothing to guide him except his own desire to get good men, and no means of getting them except from the ranks of the individuals who descended upon him like the plagues of Egypt. He sought aid from his cabinet members so far as he could, but their knowledge covered only a few applicants for positions. Over the others he struggled and labored trying to find some rational ground for decision. Under the circumstances a little more of that "hard edge" whose absence was pointed out by his critics would have been to his advantage. Some professional politicians were moved to pity by his manifest discomfort and clumsiness in meeting rival claims. One such compared him to "nothing more than a big, confused Newfoundland dog." A not unfriendly newspaper correspondent in the Cincinnati *Enquirer* wrote (April 9):

"What Garfield needs most is a confidential friend in the cabinet to whom he can unburden himself, and who will advise him to do that which is for the best interests of the Republican Party; not only advise him but show him. Garfield is a child in his ignorance of men. While he is great among his books and his theories he sees only one side of men. He can't fathom their motives." There was some truth in this observation; for Garfield's lifelong habit of thinking well of men, of taking them at their face value, of wishing to agree rather than to disagree, had ill fitted him for estimating with swift accuracy the real caliber of those he dealt with. It was from the depths of his soul, undoubtedly, that on March 16 he sent this note to Hinsdale: "Dear Burke, I throw you a line across the storm, to let you know that I think, when I have a moment between breaths, of the dear old quiet and peace of Hiram and Mentor." Yet with a sort of grim determination, making close study and thought take the place of intuition, he stuck to the task, and ended by making as good a record as many a man who enjoyed the game of handling patronage as much as he detested it.

However much Garfield disliked the management of appointments, he had one at his elbow to whom the process was full of zest. This was Blaine, of whom Sherman had written to Garfield months before (January 23): "If you can only restrain his immense activity and keep him from meddling with other departments, you will have a brilliant secretary. If Blaine talks with you about appointments in other Depts tell him you will confer with the head of that Dept." Garfield must have recalled this advice many times, for Blaine instantly busied himself with appointments in every department. He had one simple and sufficient criterion: it was the business of the President to reward friends and punish enemies, and in interviews of which no record exists and in many short peremptory notes which have been preserved he constantly urged Garfield to strike at "Stalwart" elements wherever found. One of these notes, early in March, may serve to illustrate. "Logan and his immediate friends are reporting everywhere that you have promised to appoint A. M. Jones, Marshall 10th Dist, of Illinois. Now please

remember that A. M. Jones was the author and finisher of the great fraud which the National Convention stamped out. He it was that headed & led the Grant forces in all the bulldozing, cheating & fraudulent methods which for the time crushed out your friends in Illinois. If you now specially reward Jones, Mr. President, you will mortally offend every man in Illinois who fought in the cause that made your presidency possible. I write earnestly Mr. President, but I write as your devoted friend, personally and politically."

To have followed Blaine's advice and continued the convention fight would have led to an immediate quarrel with the hot-tempered Logan. Garfield evidently saw that the appointment would be unwise, but he was not ready to force a rupture. His journal records (March 17): "Had a long tussle with the Illinois question. . . . Retired at 10.30 but could not sleep." On the eighteenth a solution was reached of the kind that Garfield preferred—"Gen. Logan at the end of a long conference agreed to withdraw Jones from the candidacy for the Marshallship." Small wonder that Garfield wrote Jones, March 21, a letter of heartfelt thanks. So the matter was ended peaceably.

While this difficulty was being quieted, another arose which concerned Blaine himself. Garfield had agreed, to satisfy him, to appoint W. E. Chandler to the position of Solicitor-General. This proved to be intensely offensive to McVeagh, the Attorney-General, since Chandler, in the past, had publicly attacked him. The journal shows that Garfield labored patiently, during several days, to remove his objections, but that McVeagh was stubborn. On the twenty-fifth, said the journal, "McVeagh considered my appointment of Chandler as compelling his resignation after what he had formally said to me against it." On the other side, Blaine urged Garfield not to yield but to insist at any cost, the reason being that Chandler was too valuable a handler of patronage to lose. In a letter in March he mingled arguments high and low in amusing fashion. "You can never surrender," he said, "without a fatal compromise of your own power and dignity. If McVeagh carried his point you will have seven masters on the cabinet instead of seven ministers

under your own constitutional direction. If McVeagh succeeds in driving Chandler off, Windom can readily exclude McPherson, and you will thus be deprived of the services of men who will not only be admirable officers in their respective departments, but will guard with jealous care the politics of your administration and organize with ability and fidelity in your personal interests. As against either of these two men, weighed as of value to you and your administration in the future, McVeagh is not a unit to a thousand." He enclosed a suggested draft of a letter to McVeagh, laying down the law to him.

To Garfield such arguments as Blaine urged were absolutely without weight. Not the remotest sign appears that he attached any importance to Chandler's organizing capacity. In this case he finally induced Blaine to yield: "(Mar. 26). Lincoln called on McVeagh & found him determined to resign if Chandler is made Solicitor General. I called on Blaine who is in bed with inflammatory rheumatism and he agreed to have Chandler decline after he is confirmed. In this way I hope to tide over a catastrophe." He could "save Blaine's face" and still keep McVeagh in the cabinet. But he added: "I do not know that I shall ever become reconciled to this office. I see few signs that I shall. The prospect is,—a long struggle with personal wishes and a painful series of deciding between men. In some way the civil service must be regulated by law, or the president can never devote his time to administration." As it happened, Chandler's nomination was rejected by the Senate on May 20, and so he did not secure even the empty honor of an appointment.

The collapse of Conkling's resistance and the adjournment of the Senate after ratifying the Robertson and other nominations, did not bring Garfield the slightest relief from pressure concerning appointments. The persistent seekers remained and considerations of efficient administration, and of state politics came in to require changes and new appointments. Garfield's letter files were filled with correspondence regarding offices, none of it worth quoting, perhaps. He soothed those to whom he could not give desired positions, he explained to public men why he could not find a place for

their particular protégés, he went round and round on the treadmill. To Wharton Barker, for instance, he wrote, June 3, a typical note: "Since you were here I have seen some people from Philadelphia who say there will be great dissatisfaction if more people are brought into the Phil. offices from other parts of the state. This, in connection with my embarrassment in reference to the name already sent to the Senate, leads me to think we had not better go in the direction named at least for the present."

Frequent incidental remarks show his attitude. On April 17, when his wife was in New York and the children at the circus, he said, "the house was quite deserted except the never failing seekers for place." On June 6, returning to Washington after three days, "The stream of callers which was dammed up by my absence became a torrent and swept away my day." Two days later he broke out: "My day in the office was very like its predecessors. Once or twice I felt like crying out in the agony of my soul against the greed for office and its consumption of my time. My services ought to be worth more to the government than to be spent thus." Once he remarked to his secretary: "These people would take my very brain flesh and blood, if they could. They are wholly without mercy in the drain they make on my vitality."¹ Rarely did he record any of the individual cases, but on June 15 he wrote: "On the whole, about the hardest day for two weeks or a month. Not only an unusual number of people called but some trying work. Among other things to ask Bently to resign the Commissionership of Pensions. On some accounts he has been an admirable officer, but there are irritations within and without the office which will, for a time at least, disappear with a new man."

It was with mingled indignation and depression that he expressed his detestation of the whole business in the journal of June 13, where his view of the true nature of the presidency was expressed. "I am feeling greatly dissatisfied for my lack of opportunity for study. My day is frittered away by the personal seeking of people, when it ought to be given

¹ J. Stanley-Brown, 1924.

to the great problem(s) which concern the whole country. Four years of this kind of intellectual dissipation may cripple me for the remainder of my life. What might not a vigorous thinker do, if he could be allowed to use the opportunities of a Presidential term in vital, useful activity! Some Civil Service Reform will come by necessity after the wearisome years of wasted Presidents have paved the way for it."

Under the prevailing habits, all foreign appointments were among the choicest "plums" of the spoils system, and were especially open to employment by the President to satisfy his own personal obligations. It has been already noted how he made use of the consulship at London to provide a place for Merritt when he wished to appoint Robertson to the New York collectorship. Other appointments were doubtless made for political reasons, to reward party services. On July 1 Garfield "appointed nearly twenty five ministers and consuls."

But when able to follow his own inclinations he showed a strong desire to appoint literary men to foreign posts. One of his first letters after being elected was the following, to James Russell Lowell (December 11, 1880): "While I cannot answer your inquiry in reference to the future of the English mission with absolute certainty, I do not know of any emergency that will require a change within the time you mention. The personal gratification which I felt at your appointment, will be enhanced, if, as I hope, your services can still be retained."

Another appointment was that of General Lew Wallace, whose origin appears rather amusingly in the journal. Garfield read novels of various sorts, to divert himself after the beginning of the administration. On April 13 he began *Ben Hur* and read until 2 a.m. Two days later he read some more and noted that the novel "keeps up in dignity and interest." By Sunday, April 17, his enthusiasm began to rise. "In the afternoon saw a few callers but spent most of the time with '*Ben Hur*.' The plot of the story is powerfully sketched and the tone is admirably sustained. I am inclined to send its author [Lew Wallace] to Constantinople where he may draw inspiration from the modern east for future literary

work." On April 19, having finished the novel, he concluded: "Wallace surprises me with his delicacy and penetration as well as his breadth of culture. I think Constantinople would give him opportunities for still greater success and I will try to give him that mission." He had already named him for Paraguay, but this new plan was substituted.

It is interesting to see how facts bear on the charge of ingratitude constantly brought against Garfield by the New York group, if we consider his actions toward the men who had deserved his consideration, not by a condescending support in one political campaign, but by constant friendship and service. Nothing is more striking, as shown by the letters printed in this biography, than Garfield's tenacity in holding to old friendships and recognizing their claims. Men that he knew and loved he was prepared to stand by to the last, and when he became President he was ready to use his position to do them favors which he felt they deserved. Of course men like Rockwell, Rhodes and Harmon Austin, who wanted nothing, lay beyond the reach of his presidential patronage. But those who had been in politics or who were prepared to accept office he gladly aided. John Q. Smith, his old colleague of the Ohio Senate, he reassured as to his position in the consular service. "There have been many applicants for your place," Garfield wrote (April 29), "but I have given no heed to the pressure on that subject. I hope I shall be able to protect you in your present position."

His intimate friends of the Forty-second he honored in various ways, nominating Pardee for a district judgeship, Sheldon to the governorship of New Mexico, Captain C. E. Henry, his constant political agent in the nineteenth district, to the United States marshalship in the District of Columbia. For D. G. Swaim, his staff officer in the Army under Buell, he assisted in securing the position of Judge Advocate-General from Hayes before his own term began. But Garfield was not blind in such matters and took good care to appoint no man to a position beyond his capacities. When his faithful stenographer, G. U. Rose, for instance, who had written his letters and filled in his journals for years, expected to be made private secretary, not realizing

that the position called for diplomatic and political experience quite out of his line and beyond his abilities, Garfield felt compelled to deny him his request.

After the refusal of John Hay, Garfield had at first no formally designated private secretary, but actually put more and more confidence in Joseph Stanley-Brown, the young man who had proved so successful in handling his correspondence since 1873. Brown was only twenty-four years old, but he had always lived in Washington and had the keenness to appreciate the nature of presidential politics. Installed in the quarters of the private secretary he soon showed that he could be of great assistance in meeting office seekers and deputations as well as attending to letters. When he went for rest, after the labors of the campaign, on a voyage to England, Garfield noted in his journal the effects of his absence. June 7 he wrote, "I miss Brown, (who is today in mid-ocean) for his anticipating thoughtfulness in reference to office work." And two days later he noted another quality (June 9): "The crowd of callers was very great. I miss Brown whose tact saved me from many people who now elude the skill of P—." Apparently Garfield had found the person he most needed, a man who could give him positive assistance in the sort of work where he felt himself least well qualified, the handling of the professional office seeker. By the end of March he was formally named as private secretary.

Garfield's experience during these months proved how impossible it was for a president, no matter how honorable his aims, to make the spoils system operate successfully. There can be little doubt that he had learned this lesson very thoroughly and realized that his methods, however applicable to the nineteenth district, were bound to break down when attempted for the whole United States. It is certain that at the first session of the incoming Congress Garfield would have undertaken to press, with all the vigor at his command, the enactment of a genuine Civil Service Law. He declared this intention in his inaugural address and in private letters, and his frequent complaints over the intolerable burdens of the spoils system, in his journal, indicate

that he would have approached the subject with added depth of feeling. It is possible that had he lived, his name, instead of going down to history linked with an ignoble contest over offices, would have been connected with the enactment of the first enduring Civil Service Law. On this Blaine said, in his "Eulogy" (p. 44): "He was earnestly seeking some practical way of correcting the evils arising from the distribution of overgrown and unwieldy patronage—evils always appreciated and often discussed by him, but whose magnitude had been more deeply impressed upon his mind since his accession to the Presidency. Had he lived a comprehensive improvement in the mode of appointment and in the tenure of office would have been proposed by him and, with the aid of Congress, no doubt perfected."

There can be observed a strong tendency on the part of those who have written of these months to consider Garfield's record on appointments and removals, including the Robertson affair, as indicating a complete lack of executive power on his part. Senator S. M. Cullom, for instance says: "Garfield was not a strong executive officer. In the brief period in which he occupied the White House, he did not make a good president and in my judgment would never have made a good one. He vacillated in the disposition of his patronage. He was not at all fitted for the position of chief executive of the United States."¹ Somewhat similar judgments are to be found in the historical works of J. F. Rhodes,² E. E. Sparks³ and E. B. Andrews.⁴

In considering such criticisms it should be said that to base an estimate of the promise of an administration solely upon the record made in appointing and removing officials is to leave out of account matters of vastly greater significance. Making appointments to office is but one of the executive functions and it is, perforce, most active at the very beginning of an administration. Frequently it is the

¹ Cullom, *Fifty Years of Public Service*, p. 127.

² *History of the United States*, Vol. VIII, p. 146.

³ *National Development*, pp. 182-191.

⁴ *United States in Our Own Times*, p. 334.

only thing done in the first six months. Even assuming that Garfield had acted for purely political reasons and under Blaine's influence it would be utterly unfair to make the Robertson case the sole ground for a final judgment. But taking into account Garfield's actual motives and his complete independence of Blaine in the whole affair it becomes impossible to discover in the episode anything more serious than a contest in which Garfield played actually a magnanimous part and fell short only in tactical details; while his complete and crushing victory can hardly be considered a proof of his unfitness for leadership. Taking into consideration the fact that he could have avoided a rupture with Conkling only by a complete submission to his will it will not do to lay on him the sole blame for the quarrel, nor to stigmatize it as an "attack" on Conkling. It is only common fairness to accept Garfield's own statement of his objects and motives, and these, it has been emphatically shown, were in no sense aggressive or partisan.

But what renders any such judgment superficial is that enough happened during these few brief months to demonstrate beyond shadow of doubt the possession of genuine executive ability on his part. Few presidents assuming office in time of peace have so quickly demonstrated their powers of prompt decisive action and readiness to assume full responsibility, as the following pages will illustrate.

It is a striking fact that while Hayes's administration had been characterized as a whole, by a high standard of integrity, one of Garfield's duties was to discover and root out a case of gross corruption which had existed in the Post Office Department prior to his inauguration. When he took office public suspicion had been aroused as to the payments for mail-carrying contracts and one of his first acts was to instruct James, the new Postmaster-General, to conduct an investigation. The first mention in the journal was in April, but according to James's sworn testimony of March 5, 1884, Garfield had taken the matter up a month earlier. "On the 9th of March," said James,¹ "the president sent for me and

¹ House Misc. Doc. No. 38, 48 Cong., 1 sess., pt. 2, p. 2.

brought up the subject of the star-route service. He said he was satisfied that there had been wilful waste of the public money and gross corruption; that the proposed investigation should be aimed at a system and not at men; but that if the inquiry should disclose the fact that any person or persons had been guilty of corruption or fraud, that person or those persons must be handed over to the Department of Justice."

The result of this action was to uncover one of the great political scandals in United States history, the "Star Route frauds." Garfield reported in his journal April 9: "The Postmaster General and special agent [Woodward] came and reported what they had discovered concerning the Star contract service. Great frauds have been discovered and I will clear out the contract office." On April 13 matters had progressed so far that he wrote: "The situation will require the removal of several prominent officers. I shall wait a few days for fuller knowledge of the facts." The next day (April 14) the Postmaster-General and Attorney-General called and furnished further news. "The corruption and wrongdoing," noted Garfield (April 14), "has been of a very gross and extensive kind. I am surprised that it could have so long escaped the notice of President Hayes's administration."

At the cabinet meeting on April 19 Garfield "insisted on immediate action of the Post Office department," and during that day and the next, new men were appointed first and second Assistant Postmasters-General. Brady, the person implicated in the Star Route scandals, was allowed to resign upon demand instead of being removed, as Garfield himself would have preferred (April 19). Even out of this house-cleaning it was impossible to keep the New York difficulty. The journal (April 20) says, that for first Assistant Postmaster-General, "James proposed Elmer and I consented. . . . At half past eleven Knox came, suggesting that Platt was behind Elmer and had much to do with Star contracts. I sent for James and had Knox talk with him but he [James] said he would vouch for Elmer. I sent in the list."

At this stage of the affair grave political difficulties suddenly presented themselves. When McVeagh and James

placed their evidence before Garfield, the former said:¹ "‘Before a final decision, remember that these proceedings may strike men in high places; that they may result in changing a Republican majority in the United States Senate into a Democratic majority: that it may affect persons who claim that you are under personal obligations to them for services rendered during the last campaign—and one person in particular who asserts that without his management you could not have been elected. Look these facts squarely in the face before taking a final stand, for neither the Post-master General nor myself will know friend or foe in this matter.’ The President walked across the room, reflected a moment and said, ‘No, I have sworn to execute the laws. Go ahead regardless of where or whom you hit. I direct you not only to probe this ulcer to the bottom, but to cut it out.’" In Garfield’s journal a similar episode appears under April 22 when Knox, Garfield’s New York classmate was present, and "thought the investigation, if pursued would involve several senators and possibly would change the politics of that body. I said no matter but let the work go on."

The next day James gave out to the Associated Press a list of ninety-three mail routes in the Southwest on which incredibly large amounts of money had been spent. The nature of the swindle called for collusion with the Post Office officials and with the auditing officers of the Treasury Department, since a large amount of red tape had to be evaded in order to meet the statutory precautions enacted by Congress. Reduced to simplest terms, the plan was for one of the conspirators to secure a mail contract by making the lowest bid, according to law, and then to have anywhere from three to ten times as much paid him in return for "expedited service" or "more frequent service" or on other pretexts which were invariably fraudulent, since the routes ran chiefly in the wild and unsettled parts of the Southwest. This plunder was divided among the ring, at whose center was generally supposed to sit ex-Senator Dorsey, the late secretary of the Republican National Committee.

¹ House Misc. Doc. No. 38, 48 Cong., 1 sess., pt. 2, p. 4.

James, while postmaster of New York, had had strong suspicions of the nature of the rural mail routes, and his nomination to the cabinet had been vehemently opposed by Dorsey, in no small degree because of this fact. Now that James was in office, Dorsey's fears proved abundantly justified. It was to Dorsey that McVeagh alluded in his interview and it was with him in mind that Garfield ordered the Attorney-General to proceed regardless of politics. On April 23 the journal commented, "The Star Service has stirred up a great deal of feeling and much apprehension among the people who have been concerned in that business." After that no mention occurred for some weeks, although Brady, the Assistant Postmaster-General who had been forced out, took the remarkable step of trying to protect himself by asserting that Garfield himself had known and approved of his operations. On May 5, as proof, he gave to the press a letter that had come into his possession, written by Garfield during the campaign. It ran "My dear Hubbell. . . . Please say to Brady that I hope he will give us all the assistance he can. I think he can help effectively. Please tell me how the Depts generally are doing." This was supposed to indicate that Garfield expected to get financial aid from the Star Route contractors. As a matter of fact, it was an inquiry as to how the government clerks were subscribing, under the established custom. At worst undignified, and indicating no scruples concerning one of the abuses of the spoils system, it could damage Garfield only with professed reformers.

After the victory over Conkling, the chief problem of a political character that still confronted Garfield was that of the Star Route frauds, into which James and McVeagh were steadily delving. At first all that they actually discovered were small offenders. The journal said (May 7): "We have arrested some people in Philadelphia who were connected with Post Office frauds. This I think will show our determination to go through the Department and see the bottom of its troubles." But the investigations soon began to approach the "men higher up" and according to both James and McVeagh, the chief of these, Dorsey, made energetic efforts to start a backfire by instigating savage attacks on them in

the Washington newspapers. "His object," James said, was "to shield himself, to bring the investigation to naught, to disturb the relations of the President with his cabinet and to convince the country that 'persecution' was the primary motive of the Department and the Administration. The most brazen effrontery and reckless prevarication were freely indulged in."¹

Dorsey also demanded of James and of Garfield himself that he be given a special investigation, and that the legal proceedings under McVeagh be dropped. Garfield's journal says (May 14): "I was kept up until midnight by business connected with Dorsey's troubles. I have great sympathy with him and some doubts." Dorsey then went to McVeagh, claiming he had the President's sanction for a special investigation, but the Attorney-General refused pointblank. "I stated," he said, "that the matter had gone so far that it would be useless to attempt to settle it by any other than a judicial investigation; that behind us was the President and behind him was an aroused public opinion and the press of the country."² Dorsey tried to bluster, asking if he proposed to disregard the "orders of the President," but McVeagh was unmoved.

That evening, May 15, the matter was settled. Garfield could not help being disturbed over the plight of the man who had worked with him so ably the preceding year. "These prosecutions," said McVeagh,³ "were a source of very great anxiety and I might almost say of distress to President Garfield. It would be very strange if it had been otherwise." The journal says: "In the evening nearly all the members of the Cabinet called . . . McVeagh and James to talk of Star Route frauds and Dorsey's connection with them, Windom to counsel caution in listening to accusations. I gave orders that no prosecutions should be begun without my orders." McVeagh's testimony shows that on this occasion he repeated to Garfield what he had said to Dorsey about the worthless-

¹ House Misc. Doc. No. 38, 48 Cong., 1 sess., pt. 2, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

ness of a mere investigation. "I remember very distinctly," he said, "having stated to the President just the views I had expressed at this interview with Mr. Dorsey and his counsel; and that they received the President's cordial approval."¹ So the collection of evidence went on, Garfield refusing to interfere. "Everything," said McVeagh,² "was carried on with his constant knowledge and sympathy."

Whenever James and McVeagh requested action, he backed them up. "June 1 Demanded the resignation of McGrew and his Deputy of the 6th Auditor's office, this on the report and request of McVeagh and James. I am very sorry for McGrew and hope he may still prove himself innocent of wrong." A few days later Garfield became disturbed over the character of the two special agents who had been employed in the investigation. One had been a New York *Sun* reporter, and the other, according to one of the Supreme Court judges, was a lawyer of damaged reputation. "I learned some things," he writes (June 1), "about the employment of Gibson and Cook by the Attorney General, in connection with the Post Office investigation which trouble me. The latter has long been my defamer, the former has an unsavory reputation." On the sixth: "I sent for Mr. Woodward, Post Office Inspector, to find what was being done in the Star Route investigation, and to know why Gibson and Cook had been employed. . . . I find there is much feeling among my friends that such men should have been employed without first consulting me." But when assured by the inspector that it was absolutely necessary to have a local lawyer "who possessed an intimate knowledge of the darker elements that go to make up the life of the District," he seemed "partially satisfied."³

Early in June the two cabinet members received a deeply incriminating confession from M. C. Rerdell, the confidential secretary of Dorsey, laying bare his share in the Star Route frauds. While they were prosecuting their work with

¹ House Misc. Doc. No. 38, 48 Cong., 1 sess., pt. 2, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ Testimony of Woodward, *Ibid.*, p. 336.

this added light, Dorsey succeeded in inducing Rerdell to "recant" his confession in writing, and on June 28, backed by R. G. Ingersoll, he laid this before Garfield. The journal says: "Dorsey and Ingersoll came and read me an affidavit of Rerdell recanting his pretended revelations to James and McVeagh. I told them he [Rerdell] confessed himself a liar and a scoundrel and I did not believe a word of his stuff as against James and McVeagh." According to both the latter men Dorsey went further than this and demanded that Garfield turn them out of the cabinet for suborning a witness and trying to steal his [Dorsey's] papers. McVeagh asked the President the next time he saw him whether he had received the recantation "and he said he had declined to receive any such paper whatever and had answered that if it was left with him the only action he could take upon it would be to have the man who had made it immediately arrested for perjury."¹

The last thing mentioned of Garfield in connection with the Star Route affair was on June 29, when he complained to James that Cook and Gibson, the necessary but unsavory agents, were too slow. He sent for Cook and "suggested that they should be more earnest in their work, and that they should have the accused parties indicted and tried."² Everything reported in connection with the investigation indicates that Garfield, in spite of his sympathetic habits and his supposed softness of fiber, was the driving force. James said, at the end of his testimony, "His conduct in the whole affair was honorable and courageous in a high degree and was inspired by a lofty sense of the duties of his office."³

Turning from matters under Garfield's personal direction to those where his action took the form of supporting bold and successful measures undertaken by his cabinet officers, the most conspicuous immediate triumph was that of the handling of the funding problem. In dealing with the debt question, the administration might summon a special

¹ House Misc. Doc. No. 38, 48 Cong., 1 sess., pt. 2, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

session of Congress to pass a new law, or it might devise some expedient which would obviate any legislation until the regular session; but whatever was done had to be settled promptly, for the mass of the bonds would mature in a few weeks.

Garfield took the matter up as soon as the first rush of visitors was over and in so doing made it perfectly evident that he fully comprehended the nature of presidential authority and was prepared to exercise it firmly and quietly from the start. From his long-established interest in finance he was well qualified to act with Windom, and could count on the advice and assistance of Sherman, now a member of the Senate, and from his late tenure of the secretaryship thoroughly acquainted with all the elements of the situation. The journal records a conference with Windom on March 19, and discussions with him and the cabinet over the problem of calling an extra session on March 22 and 25. On March 26 he wrote, "After mature deliberation and consideration of the arguments on both sides I decided against calling an extra session of Congress preferring the uncertainties of partial refunding to the uncertainties of the session."

Windom and McVeagh were then sent to New York "to consult with bankers and brokers and lay the result of their consultations before the cabinet a week from today" (March 29). The semipolitical aspect of the problem was referred to by Garfield in a note which he sent after Windom (March 30): "The more I reflect upon the financial situation the more I am impressed with the desirableness of making a popular loan. It would free us from all chances of encountering the popular prejudice which syndicates encounter, and would give your administration of the Treasury a most handsome send-off. If some of the leading capitalists would help the movement at the start, the popular tide would be likely to set in with additional strength. Probably the bankers and brokers will try to discourage this view, but if they see it is to be vigorously tried, they may see that it is safest to join in."

On April 4 Windom and McVeagh returned, having worked out a plan. Their visit, he wrote, "results in the belief that we can sell the remaining four per cent bonds by popular sale also, that we can get in the 6's and 5's partly by purchase and partly by agreement with their holders to take three and a half per cent interest. If this last should prevail it would be a very brilliant feat of financiering." One can see the zest with which Garfield assisted in the plans of his cabinet subordinates in this matter. It was a welcome relief from the "hateful questions of personality."

The next day the cabinet discussed the funding plan for two hours, and then the Secretary of the Treasury was told to take it up with experts and push it along. By the twelfth of April Garfield was delighted with signs of probable success. "Our plan of refunding promises to work well. The six per cent bonds have risen from one half to three quarters of a cent in consequence of the offer to let the holders retain them at three and a half per cent interest, and the fours of which we have not offered the surplus to the market have fallen as much. This shows that capitalists are buying in the sixes to prepare for the exchange. The Secretary of the Treasury tells me he had sixteen hundred thousand of the sixes offered today for exchange." One can read the solid satisfaction which he took in a successful financial operation of this bold and ingenious character.

In the midst of the tension over the New York appointments, Garfield's journal continued to note the successful progress of the scheme. "April 26 The refunding is going on favorably. We have sent an agent to London to effect the transfer of the bonds from 5 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent." On May 13 he wrote, "the conversion of 6's and 5's into $3\frac{1}{2}$'s promises to be a great success," and on May 23, just after the victory in the Robertson affair, he recorded a final triumph. "The refunding has been a complete success, nearly a month before the option expires for converting the registered 5's into $3\frac{1}{2}$'s we have received the full amount invited, 250 millions and several millions in addition. The secretary will give notice in the papers tomorrow morning that no more can be received." This plan, according to Sherman, origi-

nated with Windom, and its successful completion established the reputation of the Secretary against whose total unfitness Blaine had so persistently warned Garfield.¹ It also reflected credit on McVeagh, whose legal advice was constantly followed. One writer claims for him the original suggestion for the plan adopted.² Wherever the proposal originated, there can be no doubt that its successful execution promised a strong financial policy for the administration.

In the other main field of executive discretion, that of foreign affairs, Garfield was in no sense the specialist that he was in finance. . . . Nevertheless his journal shows that he coöperated fully and heartily with Blaine in his organization of that new assertive American foreign policy which proved the latter's strongest title to fame. Extracts from diary and letters will serve to indicate Garfield's share in what, after the refunding exploit, has come to be regarded as the principal achievement of his administration.

For the first two months, as usual, the principal business of the state department was to conclude matters left over from the preceding administration, notably the Chinese treaty of November 17, 1880, which was not yet ratified. Blaine submitted for Garfield a draft for a special message to the Senate on this subject, and on May 5, after the Senate had resumed executive sessions, the treaty was finally ratified.

Another matter was the proposed monetary conference authorized under Hayes aiming to secure international agreement on the money value of silver. Entries in the diary show that Evarts, the late Secretary, collaborated in this matter, calling with Blaine to discuss it March 30. At the cabinet meeting April 8 "Blaine read first draft of instructions to the Monetary commissioners." On April 3 he added: "Senator Howe and S. D. Horton dined with us. . . . They sail in a few days for Europe to attend the monetary conference. I don't expect much to result from it. England is in the way."

¹ *John Sherman's Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 817.

² R. U. Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays*, p. 370.

On March 19 Garfield conferred with Blaine in reference to the proper action of the government toward the funeral of the Czar, Alexander II, whose assassination took place six days before. "Finding that Blaine was confined to his house by illness I drove over to see him. . . . After consultation it seemed best to send no special ambassador but to write a strong dispatch of sympathy and condolence, making allusion to our own loss in the death of Lincoln."

What has made Blaine's tenure of office in this year a memorable epoch in American history is that for the first time since the days of Seward, the United States adopted a positive, aggressive attitude in relation to the Caribbean, the Central American Isthmus and the Latin-American states. While there can be no doubt that this was Blaine's individual policy, and as such calls for no detailed treatment in a life of Garfield, it is interesting to discover from the latter's journal and letters that he wholly sympathized in Blaine's ideals and was prepared in one case, that of the Sandwich Islands, to go further than his Secretary.

As early as May references in the journal show that Blaine's new American policy was taking shape. "May 6. Long discussion in Cabinet on our treaty with Colombia and its relation to De Lesseps Canal scheme." A month later the scope was broadening. "June 7 Cabinet meeting with Windom, McVeagh and Kirkwood absent. Interesting conversation on the sad condition of Peru and our duty to prevent her destruction. I called up the importance of the Sandwich Islands in relation to the future commerce of the Pacific and the Isthmus canal or railway." On June 13, continuing the same subject, "Blaine came and read draft of instructions to our minister to Chili." This was the beginning of Blaine's unsuccessful effort at intervention. Evidently it had Garfield's full approval.

What is still more significant, Blaine asserted, in 1882 that his scheme for a Pan-American Conference to establish a permanent system of arbitration for the western hemisphere originated in part with Garfield. "To induce the Spanish-American states to adopt some peaceful mode of adjusting their frequently recurring contentions was re-

garded by the late President as one of the most honorable and useful ends to which the diplomacy of the United States could contribute. It was therefore the President's belief that . . . a common agreement on peace, permanent in character and continental in its extent, should if possible be secured. To effect this end it had been resolved before the fatal shot of July 2 to invite all of the independent governments of North and South America to meet in Peace Conference at Washington. The date to be assigned was the fifteenth of March, 1882, and the invitations would have been issued directly after the New England tour which the President was not permitted to take."¹

Immediately after this came Blaine's Isthmian policy. "June 14 Cabinet full today for the first time for two weeks. Blaine read an important identic note to several of our leading ministers in Europe on the neutrality of the South American isthmus, holding that the United States has guaranteed its neutrality and denies the right of other, especially European powers to take any part in the guarantee."

The allusion to the Sandwich Islands shows that Garfield had not forgotten his interest in them some years previous in Congress. He now offered to his old friend Hinsdale the position of minister to the Sandwich Islands, in the following interesting letter. After referring to Hinsdale's work at Hiram he said (June 16): "I contemplate your removal from the College with serious forebodings and shall be sorry to have our Hiram friends look upon me as the executioner of the institution; but I cannot with justice to you nor to my own feelings, forego the opportunity of giving you a chance for a rest and enlargement of your work." He then offered the position in Hawaii, pointing out its importance. "The condition of the Hawaiian kingdom is such as to give us a good deal of anxiety. The King has started on a voyage around the world, and it is feared he is contemplating either the sale of the islands or some commercial treaty with European powers which would embarrass the United States. We shall probably soon have more delicate and important diplo-

¹ Quoted in T. C. Crawford, *James G. Blaine*, pp. 28-29.

matic work in that direction than at any previous time of our history."

Such a letter as this, coupled with the approving references in the journal to Blaine's diplomatic moves, indicates that Garfield was fully prepared to back up Blaine in his new assertion of American interests in all quarters. If the time should come when he would have to assume responsibility for important decisions, it could be confidently predicted that he would sustain Blaine in his field as strongly as he had sustained Windom in the refunding matter.

It is also noteworthy that it was Garfield's administration which took the first steps toward having the United States adhere to the Geneva Convention establishing the Red Cross as an international organization. The first efforts of Rev. W. H. Bellows, and of Miss Clara Barton in Johnson's, Grant's and Hayes's administrations had been blocked by the persistent hostility of F. W. Seward, Assistant Secretary of State, toward having the United States a member of any international treaty whatever, no matter what its scope or object. It was felt to be contrary to the Monroe Doctrine.

Shortly after Garfield's inauguration he was appealed to by Miss Barton. Cordially approving of the plan, he sent her to Blaine with a letter of introduction which secured her an interview on April 11. Winning Blaine's hearty support, she then with others organized a National Association of the Red Cross to assist the movement when Congress should assemble and the consent of Senate and House would be sought for the treaty ratification and the supplementary legislation necessary for membership. Miss Barton asked the President to accept the headship of this body, as in other countries had been done by kings and executives, "but President Garfield thought he knew a person to whom that honor belonged in America. When the Red Cross was actually organized, Clara Barton was made its President on nomination of James A. Garfield, President of the United States."¹ The final steps were necessarily taken under Garfield's successor, but the decisive impulse was undoubtedly begun under him and Blaine.

¹ W. E. Barton, *Life of Clara Barton*, Vol. II, p. 158.

Scarcely less important than the political authority exercised by a President is the social influence which, with his wife and family, he exercises by his life and manners in the White House. During these crowded and exhausting opening weeks of the term the Garfield family had begun its life in the White House. Essentially simple in all their tastes, domestic and unaffected, they were, nevertheless, thoroughly familiar with Washington habits and began the process of adjustment without trepidation if without any especially happy anticipations. Every step, it may be added, was taken in the full glare of a curious and gossiping publicity which the Garfields had no means of avoiding.

One can trace in Garfield's journal the beginnings of social activity. In the first place, there were the formal receptions and official dinners which had to be begun early in the administration. On March 10 came the reception to the diplomatic corps. "For a formality," remarks Garfield, "it was very pleasant. C. grows up to every new emergency with fine tact and faultless taste." Next came the reception to officers of the Army and Navy. "The array was brilliant," ran the journal. "The Cabinet develops fine social qualities." "March 17 After lunch reviewed the Irish societies which marched through the port-cochere, celebrating St. Patrick's day," and later "gave a reception in the blue parlor to the Supreme Court and members of the Senate and House and their families. It was a very pleasant occasion not too crowded for comfort." It is clear that Garfield's social nature enjoyed these gatherings, finding them just as agreeable as the calls of office seekers were disagreeable.

Apart from the constant political visitors at meals the Garfields gave no formal dinner until April 2, when, true to his sentiments, Garfield had his old college president as his first guest. "We gave a dinner to Dr Hopkins of Williams College; present his wife, Judge Nott and the Dr's daughter, Senators Hoar and Dawes and their wives and Dr Hawkes. A very pleasant party and a good dinner *sine vino*. I drew the party into a discussion of the female element in the Catholic worship and its lack in the Protestant churches." A welcome relief from politics and offices! Later in the same

month the presidential party began to dine with members of the cabinet; April 13 at the McVeagh's, "Our first dinner out of the House since we came. . . . It was a pleasant release from the monotony of the White House to get out for an evening." Then came a dinner for Mrs. Farragut (April 24), "tea at the Blaines, May 1 and dinner at the Blaines, the next day to meet a party of visiting English noblemen, Duke of Sutherland." At the same time receptions continued. Mrs. Garfield received twice a week, her husband usually assisting her part of the time, and there were receptions for "the members of the Academy of Science and their ladies" (April 21).

During these days Garfield struggled to find some means of diversion and of exercise, finding himself severely taxed by the floods of callers and office seekers, and threatened with persistent insomnia. He took refuge with his old friends, Swaim and Rockwell, who played billiards with him in odd moments in the White House. After the first rush was over he began to take carriage drives with various people, and on one occasion he drove with his wife to the Soldiers' Home. "On the way," he wrote, "we stopped at our house, corner 13th and I. The dear old nest is deserted now. It made me homesick to leave it—or rather to see it." By the end of April he resumed once more his horseback riding, and the journal reports occasional escapes into the country outside the capital. Simultaneously the complaints of insomnia disappear.

Notes of domestic interests now were entered in the journal. One son, fired with a desire to study law, began Kent's Commentaries, and Garfield "found he had well comprehended the first chapter." Presently Mrs. Garfield became convinced that the White House needed refurnishing and her husband busied himself in getting books and trying to discover the philosophy of the subject. "Apr 9 C and I drove out . . . to the Library of Congress, to . . . ask Mr. Spofford to look into the history of the White House and its contents, of which very little seems to be known. We went through the House of Representatives wing and I felt more regret than I expected at being separated from my old

associations at the Capitol." In spite of this reflection, it is clear that by the end of the second month of his administration Garfield was beginning to find some comfort in his surroundings and the prospect of having to endure the presidency seemed less appalling than at the outset.

What was both a pleasure and a burden to him was the fact that many of his innumerable "intimate friends" now felt that the opportunity had come for them to make as free with the White House as they had with the house at Hiram or Mentor. Some of them simply "camped down on him." "One of them," said Colonel Crook of the White House staff,¹ "assumed the position of an intimate of the White House, and not satisfied with a comfortable Government berth, pushed himself in past the doors that marked the private domain of the family and took his afternoon siesta upon the most comfortable sofa he could find. . . . Others were hurt because they could not chat with the president with the same ease that had marked their visiting with 'Jim Garfield.'" But men like Swaim, Rockwell and Sheldon undoubtedly were a great resource to him in the days of official pressure. His friendship with them was quickly discovered by Washington correspondents, one of whom, writing for the New York *Herald*, printed imaginative skits of meetings of the "Chum cabinet." Mrs. Blaine referred to these old-time friends as Garfield's "kitchen cabinet," but the term was misapplied, since this group, unlike Jackson's famous circle, was wholly unpolitical.

It is interesting, at the same time, to see, from Garfield's few letters of this period, how he tried to keep in touch with his old-time Ohio associates. For instance, a note of March 30 to J. O. Converse, one of his most faithful and valuable political backers in Geauga County, shows how a voice out of the past cheered him in the midst of the political wrangling. "I have only time to thank you for your kind letter of the 16th inst. and to tell you how gratifying it is to know that my friends of the 19th Dist. stand around me with their affectionate support." Another of the same day went to

¹ *Through Five Administrations*, p. 257.

F. H. Mason, "The friendship of my Hiram & 42nd friends is most gratifying. . . . There has been no such rush upon the President and the Departments since 1861 and I am greatly overworked."

Murat Halsted has left a picture of an evening at the White House that is worth quoting:¹ "There was one evening at the White House . . . that none of those present can have forgotten; for there were not many bright hours in the midst of the dismal shadowing of the drama hastening to the tragic close. Mrs. Garfield whose chilly sensation was supposed to be trivial, was seated before the fire, and she was pale but animated surrounded by a group among whom were several very dear to her. General Sherman arrived and was—as always when his vivacity was kindly and it never was otherwise with ladies—fascinating. The President was detained for half an hour beyond the time when he was expected and came in with a quick step and hearty manner, and there was soon a flush of pleasure upon his face, that had been touched with the lines of fatigue as he saw how agreeable the company were. A lady who had never seen him before voiced the sentiment of all present, saying in a whisper, 'Why, he is the ideal President! How grand he is! How can they speak so about him? What a magnificent gentleman he is! Talk about your canal boys!' He was well dressed, of splendid figure, his dome-like head erect, adequately supported by immense shoulders, and he looked the President indeed, and an embodiment of power. He was feeling that the dark days were behind him, that he was equal to his high fortune, that the world was wide and fair before him. It was a supreme hour—and only an hour."

It was the next day after this occasion described by Halsted that the slowly growing satisfaction of Garfield in his surroundings was terribly shaken by the serious illness of his wife. The "chilly sensation" mentioned above was quickly followed by a genuine "chill" and persistent high fever complicated with great nervous weakness. It was apparently

¹ "The Tragedy of the Garfield Administration," in *McClure's Magazine*, Vol. VI, p. 277.

a case of malaria, first diagnosed as nervous prostration, until Garfield overriding the local physicians sent for his cousin, Dr. Silas Boynton, from Kansas, and put the case in his hands. It ran the usual course of the disease, with fluctuations of fever and constantly growing weakness on the part of the patient, but with no dangerous collapse at any stage; and it kept the family in a constant alternation of hope and fear. To Garfield this blow was an appalling one, for on his companionship with his wife in these trying days his whole life's happiness and contentment were deeply grounded.

His journal shows by its anxious and pathetic entries during the slow weeks of waiting how crushing the suspense was to the affectionate and tender-hearted man, who sat up with the sufferer during the night and "was made tearfully proud by the fact that she told the doctor that I was much the best nurse she had." May 11 he wrote, "I refused to see people on business; all my thoughts center in her, in comparison with whom all else fades into insignificance." "May 12. I have no heart to think of the contest going on at the other end of the avenue against me." "May 15 The external heat has abated, the very birds seem kind to her, in fact the whole world seems anxious to help her back on shore. I must think that God will be merciful to us and let her stay." In a letter to Cox of May 24 he said: "Though the worst danger appears to have passed, we are still very anxious, not knowing what new phase her illness may assume. I think, however, the fever is broken and I hope her vitality will bring her safely through. When her illness began I was greatly worn down with work; but my anxiety for her seemed to dispel my own symptoms of breakdown, and I have been in excellent health during the last fortnight. You can imagine how very small and empty all the world has looked to me in comparison with her life." Five days later there was a relapse, but finally this too passed and on May 31 Garfield wrote in the journal: "At last, on the 28th day of her illness, the doctor says with emphasis it is ended. She needs now only care and strength, and in spite of all other cares and besetments, a deep strong current of happy peace flows through

every heart in the household." So passed this great cloud away.

With the political atmosphere rapidly clearing, fortune seemed once more to smile in these weeks of the early summer, for Garfield and his family were able, after his wife's recovery from the fever, again to enjoy social life. The journal contains references to outings by the children on revenue cutters on the Potomac, and elsewhere and a full description of a three day's visit by the family, excepting Mrs. Garfield, to Fortress Monroe and Hampton Institute. The President also attended a number of commencements, including that of the naval academy and of the Law Department of Howard University. At the last-named, he reported, "I delivered the Diplomas to the Graduates. One of them (Charles H. Lemos) is my barber." From June 18 to 27 the whole family went to Elberon, New Jersey, in order to see whether ocean air might not bring strength back more quickly to the convalescent, and for a moment after arriving Garfield felt at peace. "Sun. June 19 Passed a restful day with manifest betterment in her strength. . . . The worry and work of Washington seem very far away and I rest in the large silence of the sea air. I have always felt that the ocean was my friend and the sight of it brings rest and peace."

But it was for the moment only. The next day political callers began to drop in and first one member and then another of the cabinet came bringing business. By the twenty-second so many had arrived that a cabinet meeting was held, in which the ugly passions aroused by the Conkling affair thrust up their heads in a new form. "Among other things," Garfield wrote, "the question of General Grant's behaviour was talked of and secretary Hunt suggested that they ought not to call upon him unless he called upon me. The General arrived this evening and is stopping at his son's cottage opposite the 'Elberon.'" Grant had been expressing himself publicly in a way that made social intercourse difficult. "It appears," recorded Garfield in the journal of June 21, "that General Grant received my letter of May 15th, before he left Mexico and that he is now prepar-

ing a reply. He has permitted himself to drift into a violent prejudice against Blaine, and unjustly attributes Conkling's rage to Blaine. It is now evident (what I had not supposed) that Grant had his heart fully set on the nomination at Chicago and was deeply hurt at his failure. He is talking wildly and very unjustly."

On the twenty-fourth an encounter took place between the two men. "At six drove out with C. . . . General Grant was standing in front of his son Jesse's cottage and bowed, lifting his hat. This is his only courtesy to me since he came four days ago. I do not think he can afford to show feeling in this way. I am quite certain he injures himself more than he does me. It is evident that the third term passion had entered very deeply into his heart and that he does not bear himself as becomes a citizen. He has no right to consider the appointment of Robertson a personal affront. He appointed a postmaster in my county without my consent when I was a Representative in Congress." But Grant was less small-minded than his first conduct appeared to suggest. The next day Garfield held a reception in the parlor of the 'Elberon' for the cottagers. "General Grant came in," records the journal, "and remained two or three minutes, a tardy recognition of the respect due to the office he once held." So there was no open rupture.

On the twenty-seventh Garfield returned to Washington cheered by the improvement in his wife's condition and feeling new zest for the work. On June 30 the fiscal year 1880-1881 was wound up and the first milestone in the progress of the administration had been passed. Things now seemed in such shape that Garfield could carry out a cherished plan of attending the Williams Commencement on July 3, when he would not only see his beloved Alma Mater again, but celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of graduation with the class of 1856 and also enter his two sons as freshmen for the coming academic year.

At this point the narrative must stop for fate suddenly interposed to block all plans and terminate all that had been begun. But it was not too soon for Garfield to demonstrate that in spite of his eighteen years of Congressional life, he

had been able with entire success to exercise presidential responsibility. His conduct of the refunding matter through Windom and McVeagh, his strong and hearty support of Blaine's aggressive South American and Isthmian policies; and his immediate attack, through James and McVeagh, upon the Post Office scandals prove that the courage which he so constantly showed throughout the Civil War and no less in congressional contests was undiminished and his power of command genuine and unhesitating.

This was only imperfectly realized at the time in Washington, where the tendency was strong to consider Blaine the real guiding force. An extreme expression of this view in a work by a newspaper man says that Blaine "accepted the office of Secretary of State . . . because he knew that with that acceptance he would have practically the control and direction of the national administration."¹ "The entire cabinet was made up in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Blaine; not a single element antagonistic to him was admitted. . . . The general impression throughout the country was that Mr. Blaine had the administration so completely under his will that the President was practically his private secretary and the Cabinet a board of recording scribes."²

The mythical character of this tradition is apparent to anyone who follows the correspondence and notes the relations between Garfield and his Cabinet members. With the exception of sundry questions of appointments there is no sign that Blaine had any connection whatever with public matters coming within the field of other departments, such as the refunding plan and the Star Route investigation. Windom, James and McVeagh all dealt directly with the President. Blaine's name nowhere appears in their affairs, nor do any of his notes refer to these subjects. So far as the evidence shows, Blaine's conduct toward his colleagues was beyond criticism. Garfield himself took occasion to say so in a letter of May 29, "No member of the Cabinet behaves with more careful respect of the rights of his brother members

¹ Crawford, *James G. Blaine*, p. 485.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 494-495.

than Blaine." All the evidence goes fully to bear out Blaine's own words quoted in the beginning of this chapter.

His warm friend, Hoar, left in his *Autobiography*¹ this high estimate of Garfield's promise: "I do not believe he would have been a tool or a servant in the Presidency. He would have mastered for himself the great subjects to be dealt with in our foreign policy as well as in domestic administration and legislation. His will would, in my opinion, if he had been spared to us, have been the dominant will in our Government for eight fortunate and happy years. Next to the assassination of Lincoln his death was the greatest national misfortune ever caused to this country by the loss of a single life."

While Hoar's opinion may be stated with too great positiveness, there ought to be no doubt that in essence he was right. The private and public papers of Garfield make it clear, that in no sense was he the irresolute and impulsive, soft-fibered individual imagined by his critics. While wholly devoid of masterfulness or self-assertion in manner or language, he was nevertheless immovably tenacious in following out the policies he selected. Had he possessed in addition to his social good-fellowship, a grain of the quality of self-advertisement; a particle of skill in using devices to get his intentions and ideas correctly before the public, he would not have permitted the rank growth of misconceptions to flourish that sprang up in these months. But such action was simply impossible for him; as impossible in 1881 as it had been in 1873. Garfield went on his way, knowing that he was understood by his cabinet and by his friends, and confident that history would do justice to the integrity and fairness of his motives and the honesty of his beliefs in the principles he was upholding.

For such a man as Garfield the element of time was necessary to establish full recognition of his abilities. Owing to external appearances,—his conciliatory manner, his absence of masterfulness, his refusal to assert himself even in a contest,—only those closest to him realized his fundamental

¹ Vol. I, p. 400.

power. But the members of his cabinet, Windom, McVeagh, James and Blaine, recognized it and had time been given him, it is safe to assume that the whole country would have come to the knowledge that as President he was a real executive. Failing such opportunity one can only rely on the undeniable indications given by him in these brief and crowded weeks in the spring of 1881.

CHAPTER XXX

THE TRAGEDY

ON July 2, at twenty minutes past nine o'clock, as President Garfield, accompanied by Blaine, entered the Pennsylvania railroad station in Washington, to begin his journey to Williamstown for his class reunion, a man stepped forward and fired two pistol shots at him, each of which took effect, one grazing the arm, the other striking him in the back near the spine. The President fell under the shock, momentarily unconscious, but after an instant of stunned amazement some of the bystanders carried him to an office room in the building while others seized the assassin. The members of the cabinet, Hunt, Windom, James and their families, who had already entered the train were hastily recalled and, with Harry and James Garfield, who had entered the station shortly after the shots were fired, assumed charge of the situation.

The first impression was that the wound was a fatal one. The injured man, not bleeding profusely but "presenting the appearance of perfect collapse,"¹ was removed from the station to the White House, where various doctors, hastily summoned by different persons, gathered in consultation. From the symptoms it was generally agreed that Garfield was undergoing internal hemorrhage and could not survive the night. It later appeared that the signs of collapse were due to the fact that the bullet had struck the spinal column, torn through part of it, although without actually touching the spinal cord, and had inflicted a violent shock upon the whole nervous system. Under the circumstances the members of the cabinet promptly notified the Vice-President, Arthur, that he ought to be ready to take the oath of office at any minute and on the following day, the third, he arrived in

¹ D. W. Bliss, in *Medical Record*, October 8.

Washington to wait until the outcome should be known.¹ During the rest of the day the group of physicians did little more than watch the symptoms, after a rather superficial examination of the wound, and give stimulants under the impression that any operation to extract the ball would certainly be fatal, merely accelerating what appeared to be the rapidly approaching end.

During these hours Garfield himself was for the most part conscious and, as the bulletins said, was "mentally clear, conversing intelligently when permitted to do so." From persons who were with the crowd around him at the station or who followed to the White House have come reports showing that at this crisis his steadiness of soul stood perfectly unshaken. Garfield was always a man of marked physical courage and not even the shock of an apparently fatal bullet wound and the idea of approaching death could unnerve him. As he lay at the station before the doctors arrived he said, "I don't think this is serious," and later remarked, "I will live."² Whatever his physical suffering he immediately assumed and maintained an attitude of unshaken hopefulness. At the same time he did not hesitate to face facts. One of the doctors told him plainly that he probably had internal hemorrhage. "The President," said the doctor, "replied, 'I am very glad to know my condition. I can bear it.' These words were spoken as calmly and peaceably as anything I ever heard in my life."³

His chief ground for concern, at the moment, was not for himself but for his wife. He repeatedly expressed his anxiety lest the news should so affect her, in her state of convalescence after her illness, as in some way to cause a relapse. At the same time he was anxious for her return. The bad news soon reached Mrs. Garfield at Elberon through Colonel Rockwell, and presently Harry Garfield, who, on this occasion as later in life, showed unusual power of keeping his head and not being either unnerved by excitement or crushed with grief, sent the following dispatch to his grandmother at

¹ J. S. Ogilvie, *Life and Death of J. A. Garfield*, pp. 64-68.

² New York *Herald*, July 4.

³ Max Cohen, *Garfield Souvenirs*, p. 23.

Solon: "Dont be alarmed by sensational rumors; doctor thinks it will not be fatal. Don't think of coming until you hear farther."¹

At about eleven Garfield himself dictated the following message to his wife through Rockwell. "The President wishes me to say to you that he has been seriously hurt, how seriously he cannot yet say. He is himself and hopes you will come to him soon. He sends his love to you. (Signed) A. F. Rockwell." By noon a special train was assembled and Mrs. Garfield, her daughter, Colonel Swaim and Mrs. Rockwell were sent over the various connecting railways directly to Washington, but though they traveled fast at times, even sixty miles an hour, there were inevitable delays and it was evening before they reached their destination.²

During this day the whole United States, in the utmost excitement and suspense, waited upon the bulletins which were sent from time to time from the White House, each successive one indicating that the end was approaching. Business in many places came almost to a standstill, crowds gathered before telegraph and newspaper offices in cities and at country railway stations waiting for the end and watching through the telegrams the effort of the wife to reach the side of the dying man. But through the dispatches ran the steady report of Garfield's unshakable fortitude. "At about 7 o'clock he asked Dr Bliss to tell him frankly what his condition was as between man and man. The doctor said to him, 'Unless there is a reaction you cannot live long.' The President was not discomposed at this announcement but expressed a belief in his recovery. At 8 o'clock his mind was still clear as a bell. He was cheerful to jocularity, but at that hour Dr Bliss and others announced to their friends that the President was dying and was beyond hope."³

It was after seven o'clock when the Garfield family, except for the two younger boys, was united at what seemed to be the deathbed of the wounded man. Newspaper reporters invented sensational descriptions of the meeting of Garfield

¹ Ogilvie, *Life and Death of J. A. Garfield*, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

and his wife, but as a matter of fact the two were left alone together. "Mrs. Garfield went at once to the bedside of the president who was still conscious. She was prepared for the worst," ran the authentic account.¹ "After her arrival she was alone with the president for some time. She came from the room thoroughly self-possessed: she is displaying remarkable courage and composure." She afterwards said it was her husband's calmness that steadied her. So great was it that "when he said, 'Go now and rest; I shall want you near me when the crisis comes,' she did not or would not think that he referred to his death; although she afterwards knew that he did."²

During the night which followed, the expected collapse did not occur and by morning, to the surprise of the surgeons and the joy of the whole country, the patient was visibly rallying. Hope now returned and the situation was taken in hand with new determination. "The President," in the language of the official bulletin, "was cheerful, gave evidence of having rested and made definite inquiries regarding his condition and prospects."³ Less formally, one of the doctors described what happened. "At this time he inquired of me what his chances of recovery were, saying, in his bright and cheerful way, that he desired a frank and full statement,—that he was prepared to die, and feared not to learn the worst. He added that personally he was willing to lay down the heavy burden thrust upon him. I replied, 'Mr President, your injury is formidable. In my judgment you have a chance for recovery.' He placed his hand upon my arm and, turning his face more fully toward me, said with a cheerful smile; 'Well, Doctor, we will take that chance.'"⁴ Before night these words were telegraphed all over the United States, evoking tears of sympathy and pride at the indomitable courage and steadiness that lay behind them.

¹ Ogilvie, *Life and Death of J. A. Garfield*, pp. 57, 82.

² Rockwell, "From Mentor to Elberon," in *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 437.

³ *Medical Record*, October 8, 1881.

⁴ D. W. Bliss, "Story of President Garfield's Illness," *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 300.

Garfield now selected Dr. D. W. Bliss, an old boyhood neighbor on the Western Reserve, considered the leading authority in Washington, to assume charge of the case and choose his associates. Dr. Bliss, who had been acting hitherto on the invitation of the Secretary of War, joined with him two army surgeons, Surgeon-General J. K. Barnes and Dr. J. J. Woodward, U.S.A., and Dr. Robert Reyburn, a local surgeon. He also sent for the two leading surgeons of Philadelphia and New York, respectively, Drs. D. H. Agnew and F. H. Hamilton. This group then made as close a study of the situation as the wound would allow and came to the conclusion that the bullet, hitting first the vertebral column and then two ribs and being deflected in an unknown direction, was not to be located; but that this was comparatively unimportant, since none of the symptoms indicated that any important internal organ had been penetrated or even badly bruised. It was agreed not to attempt an operation, in default of precise knowledge of the location of the bullet, but to adopt a waiting policy, hoping to maintain the patient's strength and to meet any indications of infection as they arose. Hence from July 3 the situation became one of careful nursing and feeding, with surgical intervention only in case of grave necessity.¹

Then the battle began and the White House was made into a hospital. The wives of the members of the cabinet—Mrs. Blaine, Mrs. Windom, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. James and Mrs. McVeagh—had acted as volunteer nurses during the first day and night, but their places were now taken by Dr. Susan Edson, a woman of middle age who had been an army nurse and was well acquainted with the Garfield family, and by Steward Crump of the White House staff, who proved surprisingly efficient and sympathetic. Room 17 was used for a while, but later room 18, a corner room, was selected as the sickroom and every possible effort made to secure coolness and quiet. The former was finally attained through a refrigerating device which furnished cool and dry air. Routine was established with a morning call from Mrs. Gar-

¹ *Medical Record*, October 8, 1881.

field and an occasional visit later, but with all exciting or disturbing matters excluded and practically no visitors admitted. Daily bulletins were furnished, morning, noon and evening, and Stanley-Brown, as the President's secretary, assumed the function of issuing communications to the outside world, beside continuing to handle the mountainous mail which poured in from all parts of the United States and foreign countries.

Meanwhile the astonished public had been focusing attention on the would-be murderer, who was subjected to all sorts of questioning and investigation in his imprisonment. He was found to be one Charles J. Guiteau, a man not insane in the ordinary sense of the word, but certainly abnormal in his egotism, restless self-assertion and desire for publicity. His career showed him drifting from place to place, and from one occupation to another, unstable, ineffectual. Intellectually and morally he was eccentric to a degree that left him just above technical irrationality.¹

What struck people with amazement and horror was that he gave a political reason for his crime. He had shouted in a dramatic manner, after the shooting: "I did it and I want to be arrested. I am a Stalwart and Arthur is President now. I have a letter here that I want you to give to General Sherman. It will explain everything." The letter said: "I have just shot the President. I shot him several times, as I wished him to go as easily as possible. His death was a political necessity. I am a lawyer, a theologian and a politician. I am a Stalwart of Stalwarts. I was with General Grant and the rest of our men at Albany during the canvass." It closed by asking military protection for the jail. Another letter found in the prisoner's pocket developed the same ideas at greater length. "The President's tragic death," it ran, "was a sad necessity but it will unite the Republican party and save the Republic. . . . I had no ill-will toward the President."²

Investigation showed that Guiteau had been a persistent

¹ Ogilvie, *Life and Death of J. A. Garfield*, pp. 58-64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48; *New York Herald*, July 3.

office seeker, haunting the White House; and seems to have imagined that his failure to get a position was due to his "Stalwart" politics. But whether he would have gone so far as to try to kill the President in revenge for his own disappointment may be doubted, unless he had been made to feel by the newspaper uproar that his case was only part of a greater crime that Garfield was committing in refusing to let Conkling and his followers have their will. "When Guiteau was arrested," wrote T. B. Connery, "there was found on his person a copy of the New York *Herald* containing a severe arraignment of the president for his double-dealing with Conkling in the matter of New York appointments. The article was marked by Guiteau and it is supposed that he carried it about with him, reading it frequently and brooding over it, until his brain became inflamed with the murderous impulse. That copy of the *Herald* has been preserved by me, having come into my possession after the assassin's trial and execution."¹

While no sane person would for an instant imagine that Conkling and his associates thought death an appropriate punishment for a man who failed to recognize their exclusive rights over New York patronage, it is none the less true that the exaggerated importance attributed to such matters in party circles and in newspapers and the widespread belief that Garfield had done a positive wrong in neglecting "senatorial courtesy" served as a justification for his act in Guiteau's disordered mind. In this sense Garfield was unquestionably a victim of the spoils system, whose rules he had refused to observe. "To put a fact in plain language," said the New York *Evening Telegraph* (July 2), "the assassination of Mr. Garfield is just as natural an outcome of the debased and debasing machine politics that this nation has suffered from ever since the war closed, as is any one of the occurrences which have alternately amused and disgusted the good citizens of this nation between the time when the Senate met in extra session and the time one of the seekers after a vindication at Albany decided he did not want any vindication."

¹ *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 145.

The political consequences of the attempted murder were felt in a strengthening of the reaction already visible against the New York "Stalwarts," to such an extent that not only did Conkling and Platt themselves fail of reelection to the Senate from which they had resigned, but their faction was unable to prevent the successive choice of two open opponents in their places,—Warner Miller in Platt's place on July 16; E. G. Lapham, a "Stalwart" who had been among the first to desert Conkling, in the latter's place on July 22.¹

For Garfield, however, the world of politics and the responsibilities of office had faded away into a shadowy background as he lay between life and death, mustering all his vital forces for the battle for existence. All that lay before him was patient obedience as he waited, in constant pain, except as aided by anodynes, until it should be determined whether the after effects of the wound, with its certain infection, could be successfully combated by his physical system or would prove too strong. How his soul met this we do not know; what the current was of his thoughts can only be imagined; nor can one do more than guess what were the rise and fall of the tides of feeling within; for from the very first he resolutely set himself to meet his fate with steady courage, and never for a moment did he permit a syllable of introspection, of self-pity or regret, or even of backward-looking reflection to pass his lips.

This reticence was due in part, no doubt, to the fact that the doctors at all times discouraged talking on his part and at the first forbade it. It was thought that the effort might use some of his strength, and tend to excite his already too rapid pulse, and, in addition might be actually dangerous from the motion of the diaphragm involved.² A dispatch in the New York *Tribune* said (July 6), "The president smiled constantly at his wife and attempted to engage in conversation with her, but every endeavor was met with a stern remonstrance from the male watchers." All through the first part of July this restraint was very irksome to him, but the

¹ Alexander, *History of the State of New York*, Vol. III, pp. 481-482.

² New York *Times*, July 8.

time came when his waning strength took away from him both the inclination and the power to talk much.

Even more was this abstention from self-revelation due to his voluntary assumption of a rôle of steady cheerfulness, partly for the purpose of sparing his wife and friends, and also because at this time of supreme trial his native kindness impelled him to make things as easy as he could for doctors, attendants and nurses. "Throughout his long illness I was most forcibly impressed," wrote Colonel Rockwell, "with the manner in which those traits of his character which were most winning in health became intensified. His perfect courtesy, his consideration and thoughtfulness, his keen appreciation and thankfulness, his unmeasured affection were continually exhibiting themselves."¹

The official bulletins showed from the beginning the extraordinary cheerfulness and courage of the sufferer. "July 3. 4 a.m. The patient is decidedly more cheerful and has amused himself and watchers by telling a laughable incident of his early life. 6 a.m. He is cheerful and hopeful and has from the first manifested the most remarkable courage and fortitude." The later bulletins said less of such matters but their place was fully taken by the elaborate dispatches of the Washington newspaper correspondents who waited on Stanley-Brown daily, waylaid the doctors and others admitted to the sickroom and printed every item that they could gather about the sayings and doings of every member of the family, as well as of the patient himself.

Under this pitiless publicity the simple dignity and tenderness of the Garfield family endured unshaken. Almost as remarkable as the cheerfulness of the wounded man was the steadiness and poise of his wife, barely convalescent from her severe attack of malaria. On July 7 Dr. Edson, the nurse, was quoted as saying, "The wife of the President is the bravest woman in the universe."² When, on July 9, he was allowed to see three of his children, they showed almost equal fortitude and self-control. "The president's deter-

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 437.

² *New York Herald*, July 8.

mined will is apparent in his children," wrote one reporter.¹ Criticising sharply the tendency of sensational newspapers to sentimentalize over the situation, the New York *Tribune* remarked, August 31: "Sick room scenes which never had any existence have been described in feverish rhetoric. . . . It is the universal testimony that the Garfields are all Garfields. The children inherit to a peculiar degree the cool American sense and self-reliance of the parents and those who have seen the home life of the White House describe it as proceeding with much the same quiet as usual."

The response of the American people to these revelations of strength of soul and character was immediate. "By the everyday miracles of the telegraph and the printing press working together," said the New York *Tribune*, July 4, "the whole mass of the people have been admitted to his bedside. In these long hours of pain and mortal peril they have learned anew how brave and true and tender a soul their great ruler possessed." On the same day the New York *Times* said: "Most of our readers must have been struck . . . by the peculiar tenderness and affection with which the public have spoken of the President. . . . It was not with the people at large simply that the chief executive had been so cruelly struck down; this was inevitable and was deeply felt; but what, we think, most observers were not prepared for was the wide outburst of unrestrained sympathy and admiration and downright love for Mr. Garfield. . . . Undoubtedly the basis of the affection . . . is the conviction of the essential rectitude of the President's character. . . . Following his course in its broad features the people have thoroughly approved of it. . . . They have watched his relations with the Senate and have seen him courageous yet discreet; firm and dignified without obstinacy, showing no ill-temper and bearing with cheerful patience the wickedest attacks upon his motives. There has been nothing heroic, or brilliant, or imposing in his course, but it has been sensible, sincere, practical and honorable and it has undoubtedly given rise to a very strong sentiment of respect and confidence in the public mind.

¹ New York *Herald*, July 8.

"The hourly bulletins described Mr. Garfield as bearing himself in the face of almost certain death and under the most poignant suffering with perfect composure and fortitude. . . . Every heart felt a tender pride in hearing that the wounded and possibly dying president had preserved the bearing of a soldier in the presence of peril and pain as great as though he had fallen on the battle-field. . . . These incidents brought out the personal character, the nobility and simplicity and solid excellence of the President. . . . The capacity for instant recognition and admiration of manliness is of no small value to a people, for its basis is sympathy with the virtue to which it is directed and in the hearty sympathy which has everywhere gone out toward Mr Garfield is an evidence of the essential soundness of the popular heart."

Meanwhile the progress of the case showed clearly that infection was at work, although for weeks it seemed to make no headway. Bulletins grew more and more hopeful, until by July 13, the surgeons announced, "His gradual progress toward complete recovery is manifest and thus far without serious complications." On July 23, however, a sharp rise in temperature and a chill showed that appearances had been too favorable. An operation became necessary to open up a pus cavity which, as the report said, "must have come from a deep-seated source."¹ This gave relief and again the daily bulletins became hopeful. After a few weeks the hope that the opening of this cavity would serve to furnish an escape for all infection was suddenly upset when on August 14 there was an attack of vomiting, rise of temperature and subsequent collapse. Just as this seemed to be passing off, there appeared a swelling in the neck, in the parotid gland, August 18; a grave symptom since it showed that infection was burrowing around in the patient's system. Ultimately the diseased gland discharged through the mouth and then the ear. The question was now raised whether the constant rise and fall of fever might not be due to malaria, rather than infection. This the surgeons were obliged to deny.²

¹ Bliss, Report in *Medical Record*.

² *Ibid*.

During the last part of August the situation was recognized to be grave, in large part because Garfield's digestion, always his weak point, seemed unable to surmount the difficulties in its way and failed constantly to furnish the necessary nourishment.¹ Additional incisions had to be made in the parotid swelling. Clearly pus was forming in various places. On August 26 and 27 the doctors felt that the situation was practically hopeless. Members of the cabinet were told that death was not far off and Arthur was again notified. Newspapers printed Washington reports under the heading, "The end expected." But the patient, with astonishing vitality, rallied from this depressed state and during the first part of September there was again hope. On the sixth, to satisfy Garfield's deep desire to escape from Washington, he was moved from his sickroom to a cottage on the New Jersey coast at Elberon. The transfer was carried out successfully, by moving his cot to a large express wagon, then placing it in a special car and having a train carry it at high speed across Maryland, Delaware, part of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Once installed in his new room he seemed to improve, after recovering from the exhaustion and excitement of the journey, and by September 13 he was sitting up for short periods and watching the ocean with delight. "Thank God, it is good to be here," was his heartfelt remark, on smelling the salt air.²

By this time the attitude of the newspaper world had changed, as was inevitable, from one in which the entire attention was focused upon the patient, to one in which correspondents and editors began to query the skill and wisdom of the treatment administered by the corps of doctors. Impatient writers began to demand results; suspicious ones imagined dissension between the members of the staff and consequent failures to take action; self-sufficient ones took to framing hypotheses of the case calling for radically different treatment. Some papers took strong exception to the conventionally guarded language of the daily bulletins

¹ Ogilvie, *Life and Death of J. A. Garfield*, p. 247.

² New York *Herald*, September 8.

and were sure that the doctors were "concealing something." One paper—the same one that had circulated the Morey forgery—accused Dr. Bliss of using his position to delude the public by optimistic bulletins so that he could profit on the stock exchange. In short, the sensational press manifested its insatiable appetite for attacking somebody and for creating a mystery where none existed. Through constant discussion of the details of the case, the whole public became sated with the phenomena of suppurating gunshot wounds and secondary infection. One day Garfield himself remarked, to Swaim, after looking at a bulletin, "I should think the people would be tired of having me dished up to them in this way."¹

During the long battle, Garfield never relaxed in his self-control although there was a steady decline in his physical strength, a deadly weakness seeming slowly to overcome him. Little as he could talk, and scattered as are the records of what he said, it is clear that his mind remained unchanged and that, in the shadow of death, he was the same man as when vigorous in health. "To his son," wrote Rockwell, "a few days after his hurt, he said, with a touch of never-failing humor, 'It is only the hull that is staved in; the upper works are unharmed.' To the last day his eye was undimmed and the splendid vigor of brain unimpaired."² When under opiates or half-dozing he would seem to wander in mind, as often happens, but when awake he was unquestionably himself at all times. As one correspondent wrote,³ "The President has bent every energy of a large and well-trained intellect, has summoned all the forces of his soul and with the words on his lips, 'I will take that chance,' went down alone into the depths of that terrible struggle for life."

Putting himself absolutely in the hands of the surgeons, he devoted himself to obeying them to the letter, without complaint or question. "Quite ready for, and evidently expecting the worst," wrote Dr. Bliss,⁴ "his demeanor was that

¹ Cohen, *Garfield Souvenirs*, p. 30.

² *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 437.

³ *New York Herald*, July 11.

⁴ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 301.

of the man whose great intellect and wonderful will enabled him to give the most intelligent aid to the physician." Dr. Agnew said to a reporter:¹ "I have never seen a more patient sufferer. His mind continued clear and logical." When his appetite failed, he tried to force himself to eat from a sense of duty, one of the most difficult things to do. "He simply does not care a bit what it is," said Mrs. Edson to a reporter, "and simply takes it because he thinks it best." "He never loses sight of that idea?" "Oh no, that controls everything, even his own wishes. He wants to do just as his physicians think it best for him."² On July 23 he had a slight but very painful operation. "The fortitude of the President under the ordeal," said Rockwell, "was simply immense. He was not under the influence of any anæsthetic and bore the cutting without wincing."³ When, on August 8, the surgeons had to make another incision, a reporter asked, "Did he show a disinclination to submit to the operation?" "Quite the contrary," was the reply. "He was very cheerful about it as he is about everything. He has an indomitable will and has, I believe, courage enough to submit willingly to any operation."⁴ Ten days later, when the swelling in the neck was pronounced, a reporter, on being told that it was very painful, asked Dr. Boynton, Garfield's cousin, who was present although not officially connected with the case, "Does he complain?" "Never whimpers, Bears it like a Spartan."⁵

Garfield was not merely passive in the matter of his own illness, but asked to hear the daily bulletins, and expected the doctors to keep him minutely informed as to his own condition. As so often in his life, he affected to study his own case as though it were that of another person. One day in July he asked to see the temperature chart and after studying it he said, "The condition of that man's case must have been extremely critical at one time." He scanned with intense

¹ New York *Herald*, September 21.

² *Ibid.*, July 13.

³ *Ibid.*, July 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, August 20.

interest the progress of the case as delineated upon the charts and turning his head, remarked, "I have always had a keen appreciation of well-defined details and definite facts."¹ "This afternoon," said the *New York World* (July 9), "he startled Gen. Swaim with this poser, 'What was probably the central velocity of the bullet?' 'We will talk about that some other day,' Gen. Swaim responded in as severe a tone as he could muster. The President subsided instantly." A month later when Swaim was asked by a reporter, "Is the president fully aware of his condition?" he said: "No one more so. He has studied it carefully from the beginning. The doctors call him the most patient patient they ever saw. They do not know how intelligent his patience is. The truth is, the President has looked upon his case as an impartial outsider. He, as Mr. Garfield of Ohio, has been able, day by day, to tell the condition of the President of the United States almost as well as the surgeons of that official."²

Beneath his steady cheerfulness of manner, there is little doubt that Garfield from the start felt the struggle to be nearly hopeless, as hinted in a few sentences. As early as July 17 he remarked to his wife, "I wonder if all this fight against death is worth the little pinch of life I will get anyway?" On that same day, said Rockwell, "at noon, at his request for writing materials, I placed in his hand a clip and pencil. Lying on his back, and holding the clip in his left hand, he then wrote his name and the prophetic words, 'Strangulatus pro Re publica.' To all reflecting persons it must bring a new conviction that 'the calmest man on that terrible 2d of July' was not long ignorant of the real significance of his assassination."³ On the twenty-seventh of August, when he was having sinking attacks, "some one asked him if he was aware that the wound might prove fatal. He answered, 'Oh, yes, I have always been conscious of that,' " and on the next day, August 28, he asked his cousin, Dr. Boynton, if he was weaker. Boynton frankly told him that

¹ *New York Herald*, July 17.

² *Ibid.*, September 12.

³ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 298.

he was, and again Garfield "asked if it was worth while keeping up the fight."¹ The next day, "on hearing that the case had about ceased to be critical, he said, 'I wonder how many more stations I'll have to stop at.'"

At a later time Dr. Bliss described how Garfield met him after he had been called away from Elberon for a few hours.² "Upon my return he held out his hand and attempted the familiar smile. 'Doctor, you plainly show the effect of all this care and unrest and I am glad you were forced to take this temporary relief. Your anxious watching will soon be over.' I think that then and probably long before, the President fully believed that he could not survive. Perfectly calm, sentient,—even inclined to be jocose and humorous,—there was still an undercurrent of conviction which all our optimism could not stem." Garfield was too fully himself to permit any self-deception. For all his courage and his consideration for others, he faced facts unflinchingly and from the constantly increasing weakness and the never-ceasing fever, he knew, better than anyone else, how the tide, for all its recurrent eddies, set steadily in one direction. Yet he fought the battle to the very end.

On matters outside the sickroom Garfield retained his normal interests, little as he was allowed by the physicians to indulge them. Dr. Bliss said to a reporter, July 7: "He wants to talk about official business but we will not let him. He once said that certain District matters were on his mind and he wanted to get rid of them, but we told him they were of very little importance and to let them pass."³ "Upon waking from one of his naps," reported the *New York Times*, July 7, "he said, smiling, 'It is too bad we couldn't hold a cabinet meeting today.' Yesterday was the regular day for the meeting of the cabinet and the fact that it had been missed seemed to weigh upon the mind of the President." A month later he showed a desire to see members of his cabinet, evidently worrying lest his inaction might be hampering departmental business. On August 10 he de-

¹ *New York Herald*, August 29.

² *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 303.

³ *New York Herald*, July 8.

clared to Dr. Bliss that he could sign a document as well as ever and to prove it called for paper and pencil and wrote his autograph in a firm hand. "Immediately after that," said Rockwell,¹ "he signed an extradition paper sent from the Department of State, first requesting me to read the document—the old habit of thoroughness asserting itself." This was his only official act after being shot. At Elberon he was allowed to have a series of interviews with members of his cabinet, each of whom, by prearrangement, assured him that there was nothing calling for his action and that all things were going on well. Windom told him (September 10), that the last of the funding operations were successfully completed.² James the next day reported that he and Windom were establishing a Civil Service examination system, that no appointments or removals were necessary under it, and that, by his revision of the corrupt Star Route contracts, he had already saved a million and a half.³ Next came Hunt and then Lincoln.

On New York politics he said little. Reporters were eager to know his comments on Guiteau, but the testimony from the sickroom was that he scarcely referred to him and took no notice of his proclaimed intention to install a "Stalwart President." A reporter asked Rockwell,⁴ "Has he ever spoken of the wretched man who shot him?" "No," answered Rockwell, "only to ask his name and what had become of him. He was told and then he said, 'He must have been crazy. None but an insane person could have done such a thing. What could he have wanted to shoot me for?' I do not know that he ever referred to the matter again." On July 21, when Rockwell read him the newspaper account of the assassination, he listened in silence. At about the same time someone told him that a Senator had been elected in New York in place of Platt. When he learned that it was Warner Miller, "Thank God!" was his fervent remark; but when he learned that Lapham has been chosen in Conkling's

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 298.

² *New York Tribune*, September 11.

³ *New York Herald*, September 12, 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, July 9.

place he made an observation to Dr. Bliss that shows his utterly unquenchable magnanimity and willingness to let bygones be bygones. "I am glad it is over. I am sorry for Conkling. He has made a great mistake in my judgment. I will offer him any favor he may ask, or any appointment he may desire."¹ Comment on this is wholly superfluous. It is pleasant to note that Conkling not only sent messages of sympathy but called in person at the White House during this period.

During the deadly tedium of silence and suffering, his mind caught at whatever there was of interest; the installation of the air-cooling machinery, the effort of Dr. A. G. Bell to locate by electric devices the position of the bullet in his body. But as the weeks wore on, his thoughts began to turn toward the Mentor farm with a longing for escape; the craving of the sick and dying for home that so often wrings the hearts of onlookers. "He longed to be at his Lawnfield home," wrote one reporter. "He wanted to see Hiram and Solon and Cousin Henry Boynton and have some of Aunt Alpha's indian bread again, and pick wintergreens on the hill. He wanted to see Burke and Harry, Mary and Hitty and a score of others. He longed to be in Ohio, 'on the old sod' once more."² Sometimes the brief remarks were extremely pathetic, as when, on August 11," the President inquired if there had been any rain at Mentor recently and what was the prospect of good crops in that vicinity."³ Clearly the memories of green fields and active days with horses and oxen and crops were haunting him as he lay motionless.

On that same day, with a great effort, he actually wrote a letter to his mother, the only letter after he was shot. "Dear Mother. Don't be disturbed by conflicting reports about my condition. It is true I am still weak and on my back, but I am gaining every day and need only time and patience to bring me through. Give my love to all the relatives and friends and especially to sisters Hitty and Mary.

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 302.

² *Cleveland Leader*, August 20.

³ *New York Herald*, August 12.

Your loving son, James A Garfield." This letter in facsimile was spread all over the country as showing to the public, not only the President's tender consideration for his mother, but his unshaken courage. Again and again the world was told of his unfailing kindness and courtesy to all the doctors and the attendants.¹ Said Dr. Bliss: "Neither on the day of the dastardly act nor during the long history of sorrow, agony and death did he manifest by word or look aught but thankfulness for attention and kind consideration for all about him. I may safely say that I do not believe physician ever had such a patient before. . . . During his whole illness I never approached him without meeting an extended hand and an expression of thankful recognition of the efforts made for his comfort and recovery." Nor was his thoughtfulness confined to those near him. Rockwell told a reporter that Garfield asked him to go and carry out a promise he had made to a soldier's widow. When Rockwell returned, "'Did you see her?' he asked and I said, 'Yes.' 'All right, then,' he responded and presently went asleep.'"²

The effect produced upon the public by the display of these engaging and strong traits under the burden of constant pain and the shadow of death was overpowering. Such a savage critic as the New York *Herald* said, editorially (August 19): "Whether President Garfield lives or dies, the steady solicitude of the American people, the tender anxiety with which they watch his patient struggle for existence, the rise and fall of their fears with the beats of his pulse are a glory and a consolation in his sufferings. If he lives they inspire him to make his career worthy of such tokens of affection. If he dies, they invest his memory with a fragrance sweeter than balsams. . . . All history contains no nobler example of a people's affection for a ruler." The New York *Times* said (September 20): "So nobly and so gently has he borne himself during these eleven weeks of suffering, so worthily has the heroic character of the man fulfilled the highest ideal of what may be required of the President, that the silent sick chamber has been for him the

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 299.

² New York *Herald*, July 16.

greatest arena of his life." It was all summed up by the *New York Evening Mail* (September 20), "Lying patiently on a bed of suffering he has conquered the whole civilized world."

What was said by these leading newspapers was repeated by the press all over the country, and written in hundreds of letters and communications which poured in upon the White House. At first nothing of the excitement and emotion was allowed to penetrate the sickroom, but after a while he was told about it, and finally extracts were read to him. Mrs. Edson was asked July 12, "Has the President any intimation of the excitement the shooting caused?" "Oh, yes," she replied, "he has some idea. He asked me last week one day what the people were saying about it, and I told him that I thought it his right to know something of the intense excitement pervading all classes of people and that he had the sympathy of the whole civilized world. I told him that messages from every direction and from distinguished people were continually arriving." ¹ About a week later Mrs. Garfield began to read aloud some of the telegrams of sympathy and some extracts from newspapers. "He is deeply impressed," said Rockwell, "and says it is more than he can expect." "He exhibits no weariness at all in listening?" asked the interviewer. "No, he is positively hungry for people's opinions and what they are saying about him." ²

When he was shown some of the pictorial sheets, "he laughed over them with the rest of us. Woodcuts are rarely true likenesses and one depicting the president on his bed of suffering seemed to interest him a good deal." ³ That he could laugh over them proves his strength of mind for nothing more appallingly sensational, crude and inaccurate could be imagined than some of the drawings purporting to represent the events and personages connected with the assassination and the illness. "Many letters," said Rockwell, ⁴ "from strangers, acquaintances and friends were read to him at intervals. These with the not infrequent reading of short

¹ *New York Herald*, July 13.

² *Ibid.*, July 20.

³ *Ibid.*, July 23.

⁴ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 438.

items from the newspapers gave him an intelligent idea of the general feeling. For all this his heart was unutterably grateful."

During the summer a subscription was started for the benefit of the Garfield family, in view of the crushing financial burdens imposed upon them, and especially to relieve Mrs. Garfield in case her husband did not recover. "About ten days after the first subscription was made to the fund for Mrs. Garfield," wrote Dr. Bliss,¹ "someone of the household informed him. . . . At this he was very much surprised and said, as he turned his face to the pillow, "How kind and thoughtful! What a generous people!" He was then silent and absorbed for a long time as if overwhelmed with the thought." Determined not to give way to emotion, Garfield took refuge in silence when deeply touched. On September 8, a Thursday, he asked, when he heard a church bell ringing, "'They are praying for me?' 'Yes,' replied Dr. Edson, 'the people of the entire country are praying for you today.' 'God bless them,' said the President, and he turned his face upon the pillow and lay silent a long time.'"2

At Elberon, the sea air and the coolness made Garfield fancy that he was gaining ground and on September 8, at his desire, three of the six surgeons retired from the case, leaving Drs. Bliss, Hamilton and Agnew. There were present of the family only Mrs. Garfield and the daughter Mollie, since the two older boys had gone to enter Williams, in spite of their father's illness, and the two smaller boys remained at Mentor on the farm, which was under the charge of Mrs. Garfield's brother, Mr. Joseph Rudolph. It was a source of gratification to the wasted patient to know that his boys were actually attending his old college and a cause of half-regretful amusement to learn that almost immediately upon their arrival the two sons of the fighting leader of the Equitable Fraternity had joined the Alpha Delta Phi's "because they sang so well."

In spite of the momentary sense of relief brought about by the change and the refreshing ocean air, the battle was

¹ *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 301.

² Cohen, *Garfield Souvenirs*, p. 36.

now distinctly a losing one, for the infection was slowly forcing its way into other organs. It was noted, after the arrival, that the infection from the parotid gland had gotten into the bronchiæ and "limited broncho-pneumonia" was established. On the seventeenth of September a visible change for the worse occurred with "a sharp rigor" and the next two days passed with increased fever, fluttering pulse and partial loss of consciousness. While there did not seem to be any symptoms more serious in themselves than those which had appeared a month before, the terribly emaciated and wasted condition of the patient's body made the situation almost hopeless.

All knew that the end could not be far off. On September 18 Garfield asked Rockwell, "Old Boy, do you think my name will have a place in history?" The colonel answered: "Yes, a grand one, but a grander one in human hearts. Old fellow, you mustn't talk in that way, You have a great work yet to perform." After a moment's silence, he said sadly and solemnly, "No, my work is done."¹ Yet when husband and wife met, each for the other's sake was calm and smiling. Of Mrs. Garfield, a Philadelphia paper said, "The very brightest spot in all that household has been the courage, fortitude and hope of this very remarkable woman."

On the night of September 19, the anniversary of the battle of Chickamauga, at the hour when, eighteen years before, Garfield had been writing for Rosecrans the dispatches summoning the corps commanders to their last council before the fateful second day's fighting, the blow fell. Only the attendant and Colonel Swaim were with him when he woke and under the hand of death, for the first and only time cried out, "How it hurts here!" pressing his hand upon his heart. Swaim sprang forward, offering a drink of water, which he drained, but he immediately cried again, "Swaim, can't you stop this? O Swaim!" and became unconscious. Dr. Bliss came promptly and was followed by Mrs. Garfield, who instantly saw that the end had come, the sight extorting from her the single complaint which passed her lips, "O why am I made to suffer this cruel wrong!" Thereafter she held

¹ Bliss, in *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXIII, p. 304.

his hand in silence.¹ Dr. Bliss's record of the case, breaking for the first and only time from its conventional professional wording ended thus, "Applying my ear over the heart, I detected an indistinct fluttering which continued until 10:35 when he expired. The brave and heroic sufferer, the nation's patient, for whom all had labored so cheerfully and unceasingly, had passed away."²

For an instant Mrs. Garfield broke down and went to her own room, but almost immediately mastering herself she returned and was left alone with the dead man, "her whole demeanor manifesting her heroic spirit and self-control in that, the supreme hour of her grief." Only her daughter was with her of the family, but strong in soul to endure, she met fate with a steadiness that compelled the unmeasured admiration of the doctors as well as of the friends who were with her at the time, and impressed the entire public of the United States with her quiet dignity. Perhaps the most striking message of sympathy which she received was a dispatch from Victoria, Queen of England, who, remembering after twenty years her own loss, sent the following cablegram: "Words cannot express the deep sympathy I feel with you. May God support and comfort you as He alone can. (Signed) The Queen. Balmoral."

Almost more pathetic than the heroic silence of the wife was the grief of the aged mother, who, in Ohio with her daughter Mary, learned the news on September 20. Her agonized outcry when she realized that her son was gone filled the eyes of millions, and the words in which she spoke of him wrung the heart: "He was the best son a mother ever had, so good, kind, generous and brave. If he had to die why didn't God take him without all the terrible suffering he endured?"³

It may be doubted if at any time in the history of the United States the human sympathies of the people had been worked up to such a pitch of intensity. The death of Lincoln stirred grief, horror and dread, coming as it did at the

¹ D. G. Swaim, in *New York Tribune*, Sept. 21.

² *Medical Record*, October 8, 1881.

³ *Cleveland Press*, September 22.

end of a terrible war, but Lincoln himself scarcely suffered. In this case the brave but hopeless fight against infection, the rise and fall of hope, the rallies after apparent collapse and the final sharp death pang—all endured with a fortitude and heroism beyond praise—called forth expressions of emotion, of pity, affection and sympathy beyond anything known before.

There yet remained for the sorely stricken family, the final ordeal of playing their silent part in the pageant of the nation's mourning, which had to be endured to the end. In the midst of an unparalleled outpouring of feeling from Democrats as well as Republicans, Southern ex-Confederates as well as Northern war veterans, Garfield's body was brought back to Washington, September 21, to lie in state in the rotunda of the Capitol. On the twenty-third, after a brief religious service, the funeral party was carried by special train to Cleveland, where it was arranged that the dead President should have a public funeral and later be placed in a mausoleum. Everywhere that the train passed along the railroad from Elberon to Washington, and from Washington to Cleveland, it was met by throngs standing in respectful silence at stations and beside the tracks. The whole country gave itself over to rehearsing the lovable qualities of the dead man and the touching circumstances of his end. Sermons and addresses innumerable were delivered, memorial leaflets printed and resolutions drawn up and voted.

At the final scene, the public funeral in Cleveland, there were gathered nearly all those people who for long years had been his friends and associates, whose names have appeared at every stage in this narrative. Dr. Robison presided, the principal address was made by Rev. Isaac Errett of Cincinnati; "Harry Jones," the chaplain of the Forty-second Ohio, made the address at the grave, and President Hinsdale of Hiram College offered prayer. Around the casket moved the most tremendous outpouring of people ever known in that region. It was estimated that 250,000 stood on the streets of Cleveland,—at that time not a large city,—of whom three-fifths came from outside. The Western Reserve gathered to

greet its dead son. The veterans of the Forty-second Regiment and of the Army of the Cumberland were among those who marched and stood around the casket, the friends from Orange, Solon and Hiram, from Hiram College and from Mentor, and from all the counties where his voice had been heard and his cheery presence loved for nearly twenty years of continuous public life.

This ordeal over, the widow and her children and the mother with the sisters departed into the silence almost as completely as though they too had been laid in that Cleveland vault. The group of intimate associates who had lived with Garfield and followed his fortunes disappeared, for the keystone of their arch was gone. Each member went on to his own fate, bearing to the grave an undying memory of the friend whose love he had cherished during his lifetime.

There still remained one more series of events connected with the dead man, namely, the formal memorial addresses which were uttered in the months following the funeral. Many of these were merely rhetorical, but some, by men who had known Garfield well, possessed great value as history and as biography. The orations of such men as Cox, Keifer, Hoar and Banks are sources of positive weight, as are also the briefer addresses of Hinsdale, Rhodes, Wilber and others, as well as the magazine articles of Smalley, Halsted and Rockwell, largely quoted in these pages.

Most famous of all these addresses was one delivered by Blaine before the members of the two Houses of Congress and the executive departments on February 27, 1882. The circumstances were unusual, the situation delicate and dramatic. Before Blaine sat scores of persons who had known Garfield as Congressman and as friend, including many who had bitterly criticised his policies during the four months of his administration. There sat the two Senators from New York who had driven Garfield's leading opponents into private life; but there also was Arthur, who as Vice-President had wholly sympathized with those leading opponents and who had become President as the result of the murder, as was intended by the man who fired the fatal shot. Blaine himself, in addition, had been removed from office by

Arthur along with all the rest of Garfield's cabinet except Lincoln. Furthermore, it was widely, if erroneously believed that it was Blaine himself who had instigated if not directed those policies of Garfield which resulted in the rupture with Arthur and the New York "Stalwarts" and which had led, ultimately to the assassination.

In these trying circumstances Blaine played his part in flawless good taste and with equal fidelity to the dead man and consideration for the living. It would be scarcely possible to surpass the dignity, reticence and truthfulness with which he referred to the furious controversy which was the conspicuous feature of the administration, in words that have already been quoted. As he uttered this part of his speech, every eye was turned on Arthur, who seemed, to the newspaper correspondents who described the scene, to settle deeper into his seat and grow paler as Blaine spoke. "Through this critical passage" said the *Philadelphia Press* (February 28), "Blaine moved on in language which brought a general agreement to his assertion that 'more should not be said and less could not be.' A rustle of relief followed."

Throughout the address the estimates of Garfield's character and abilities were accurate, friendly and unmarked by eulogistic exaggeration. It would have made Blaine ridiculous to have claimed for Garfield a single attribute other than what he actually possessed, for the audience before him knew him too well to make it possible, even on such an occasion, when extravagance of language is most frequently tolerated. Mrs. Blaine wrote to her daughter (January 17, 1882):¹ "Your father is writing the Eulogy which now interests him, now tries him. The trouble is in eulogizing and not going beyond the truth, for no man knew Garfield better than your father, all his weakness and the greatness of his power." The "weakness" alluded to was, as the oration itself shows, his lack of combativeness, of masterful self-assertion, of the power of dominating other men. But that Blaine did not make the mistake of confounding this trait with a lack

¹ *Letters of Mrs. J. G. Blaine*, Vol. I, p. 288.

of will power was made abundantly clear by his striking tributes to Garfield's executive authority and decisiveness.¹ These passages were certainly intended to carry with them a denial of the charges of vacillation so constantly made by his enemies and to contradict, by inference, the belief that he himself had been the guiding force.

But what breathed through all the address even more than the justice of his analysis of character was Blaine's deep and warm affection for the man. The sense of the pathos of Garfield's last fight for life was so strong that in preparing the address it fairly overpowered him at times. "Your father," wrote Mrs. Blaine to her daughter (February 13),² "is devoting himself to the most difficult portion of the eulogy, the long sickness with its fatal termination. For the second time this morning, I see him taking from the drawer a fresh pocket-handkerchief with which he vainly tries to hide his tears." He could look back on years of friendly relations with the dead man, quickened into a close companionship at the end. It was a companionship in which neither overlooked certain drawbacks which he found in the other: to Blaine, Garfield was exasperatingly inexpert in handling party matters and unforceful in dealing with men; while to Garfield, throughout his public life, Blaine's full acceptance of machine politics and hearty zest in party management was a cause of disapproval and regret. On this subject the two men were as far apart as the poles. But neither allowed their different points of view and temperaments to obscure their mutual liking, which deepened, on Blaine's part, in the year 1881, into a profound affection and sympathy. It was from the heart that he paid this tribute, restrained for the most part to a tone of grave dignity and reflective analysis, but rising at the end to an emotional level that disclosed his own deepest sentiments; and in the famous peroration, with its cadenced lines and its pathetic imagery, he spoke not only his own grief and sympathy, but the feeling of the whole country.

"As the end drew near," said Blaine, "his early craving

¹ See p. 1143.

² *Letters of Mrs. J. G. Blaine*, Vol. I, p. 303.

for the sea returned. The stately mansion of power had been to him the wearisome hospital of pain, and he begged to be taken from its prison walls, from its oppressive, stifling air, from its homelessness and its hopelessness. Gently, silently, the love of a great people bore the pale sufferer to the longed-for healing of the sea, to live or to die as God should will, within sight of its heaving billows, within sound of its manifold voices. With wan, fevered face tenderly lifted to the cooling breeze, he looked out wistfully upon the ocean's changing wonders; on its far sails whitening in the morning light; on its restless waves, rolling shoreward to break and die beneath the noonday sun; on the red clouds of evening arching low to the horizon; on the serene and shining pathway of the stars. Let us think that his dying eyes read a mystic meaning which only the rapt and parting soul may know. Let us believe that in the silence of the receding world he heard the great waves breaking on a farther shore, and felt already upon his wasted brow the breath of the eternal morning."

The life which began by the Chagrin River on a secluded farm ended in the broadest possible glare of publicity amid the excitement and sorrow of millions. The career which had gone steadily and slowly forward, never slipping back, never stepping aside, never losing ground but constantly rising to higher and higher levels of responsibility and authority was now violently ended, just as the final step had been taken to the highest position open to any American. Therein lay tragedy, Nemesis in the Greek sense, the blind Fate which suddenly interposes with irresistible power to crush the apparently triumphant hero. But it was the tragedy of accident, of pathos, of sympathy; not the tragedy of defeat, of bitterness, or, least of all, of moral failure. Whatever Garfield had shown himself to be, as man and as a dealer with men, he continued to be to the end. Those who criticised him in his presidential months were dissatisfied with him because he failed to measure up to standards which they set up for him not because he failed in any way to live up to those he had always obeyed. Up to the end he was the man of affection, of sympathy, of courage; the leader desirous of agree-

ment rather than conflict; the clear-eyed and open-minded thinker on political problems and not the dominating master on the one hand, or the idealistic reformer on the other. To his own standards he was true, and when the blind revolver bullet struck him down, he was the same gallant, tenacious, unself-seeking man that he had been when he first entered the Ohio Senate or when he rode back through the fire of Forrest's soldiers to Snodgrass Hill. Broken short as it was, his career has the completeness that inheres in a life lived consistently and unflinchingly in the light of reason and kindliness.



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